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ABSTRACT

The National Assessment of Educational Progress is an information-gathering project which surveys the educational attainments of 9, 13, and 17-year-olds and adults in ten subject areas, with two areas assessed every year. The results of the 1971-72 assessment of political knowledge and attitudes are summarized in this report. Chapters 1-4 present national results for each exercise in the volume. The four chapters group the exercises in the following areas: attitudes toward the underlying values of American society; knowledge of the role and function of government; knowledge of and attitudes toward constitutional rights; and knowledge of the electoral process and of the role of political parties. A rationale for the choice of content of the exercises introduces each chapter. Each exercise is reproduced with its possible answers, and tables show the percentage of responses to each answer. The fifth chapter presents summary results for various sub-populations at each age level. The variables used for the division are region of country, sex, color, parental education, and size and type of community. Each variable is defined, and tables present statistics on each variable as well as on group differences from the national percentage and limitations of the data. (Author/KSM)

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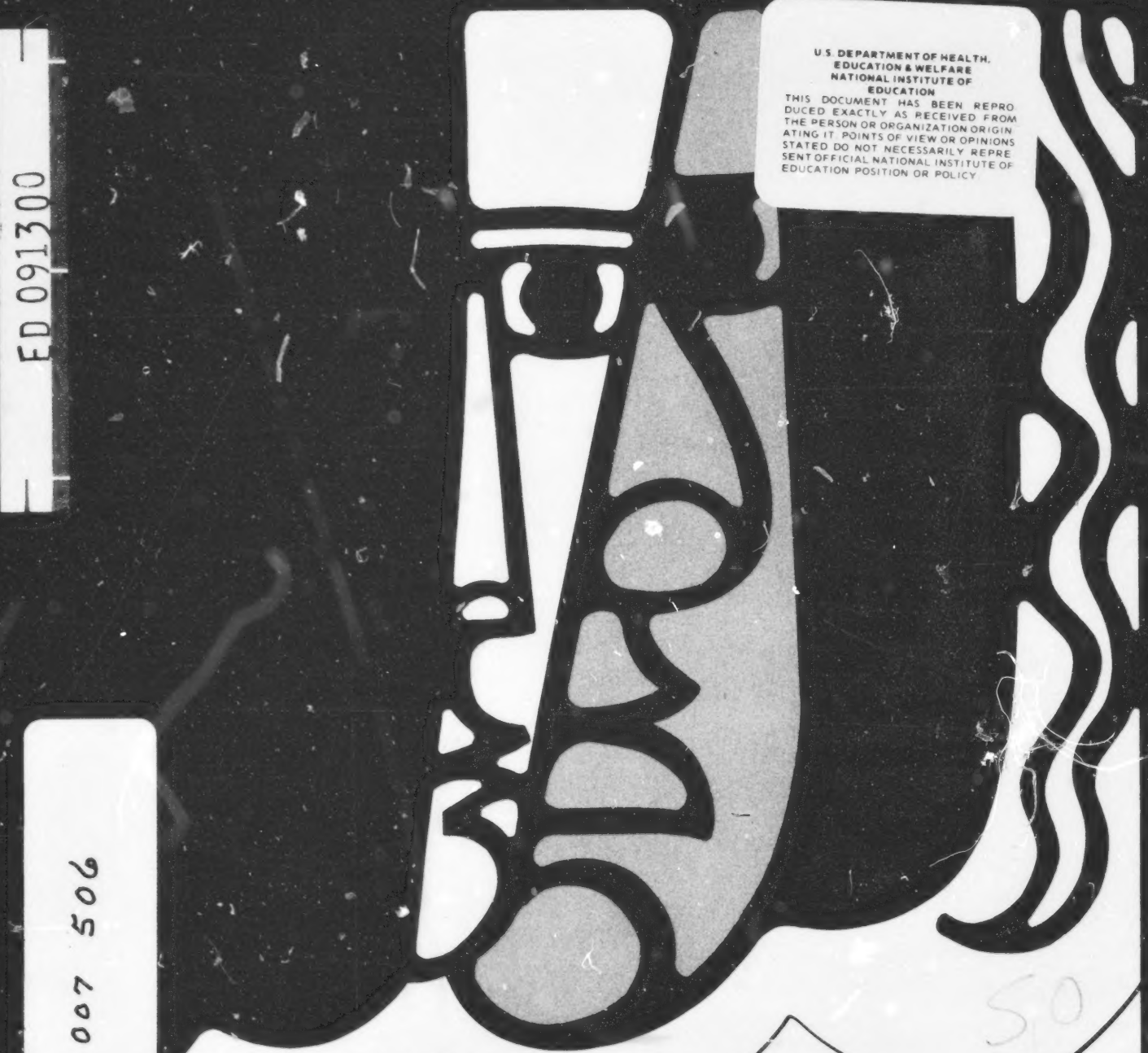

POLITICAL KNOWLEDGE AND ATTITUDES 1971-1972

NATIONAL ASSESSMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRESS
A Project of the Education Commission of the States

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Education Commission of the States, Suite 300, 1860 Lincoln Street, Denver, Colorado 80203

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A Special Social Studies Report From the National Assessment of Educational Progress

December 1973

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NATIONAL ASSESSMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRESS

James A. Hazlett
Administrative Director

J. Stanley Ahmann
Staff Director

George H. Johnson
Associate Staff Director

This report was written by Gerald L. Marriner, Assistant Professor of History, Humboldt State University and Robert Crane, Utilization/Applications Department, National Assessment of Educational Progress

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FOREWORD

The National Assessment of Educational Progress is an information-gathering project which surveys the educational attainments of 9-year-olds, 13-year-olds, 17-year-olds and adults (ages 26-35) in 10 subject areas: Art, Career and Occupational Development, Citizenship, Literature, Mathematics, Music, Reading, Science, Social Studies and Writing. Two areas are assessed every year, and all areas are periodically reassessed in order to measure educational progress. Each assessment is the product of several years' work by a great many educators, scholars and lay persons from all over the country. Initially, these people design objectives for each area, proposing specific goals which they feel Americans should be achieving in the course of their education. These goals are reviewed by more people and then passed along to developers of tests, whose task it is to create measurement tools appropriate to the objectives.

When the exercises prepared by the test developers have passed extensive reviews by subject matter specialists and measurement experts, they are administered to probability samples of various populations. The people who comprise those samples are chosen in such a way that the results of their assessment can be generalized to an entire national population. That is, on the basis of the performance of about 2,500 9-year-olds on a given exercise, we can generalize about the probable performance of all 9-year-olds in the nation.

After assessment data have been collected, scored and analyzed, National Assessment publishes reports such as this one to present the results as accurately as possible. Not all exercise results have been released for publication. Because National Assessment will administer some of the same Social Studies exercises again in five years to determine whether the performance level of Americans has improved or declined, it is essential that they be kept secret in order to preserve the integrity of the study. If the unreleased exercises can be discussed without revealing their content, they are examined. However, the discussion is much less detailed than it is for the released exercises.

Each year, beginning with its second assessment year, the National Assessment of Educational Progress publishes a *General Information Yearbook* which describes all major aspects of the Assessment's operation. The reader who desires more detailed information about how National Assessment defines its groups, prepares and scores its exercises, designs its sample and analyzes and reports its results, should consult 03-GIY, *General Information Yearbook: Music and Social Studies.*

CHAPTER 1

ATTITUDES TOWARD UNDERLYING VALUES OF AMERICAN SOCIETY

The American political system is premised on a number of tacit assumptions which are crucial to the maintenance of a democracy. Because these assumptions are the foundation of our political system, it is important to know if young Americans believe in them and show a willingness to act upon them. The questions that follow reflect the values underlying these assumptions. They have been identified for National Assessment as important by subject matter specialists, educators and lay persons and served as a basis for developing the exercises which attempt to answer them.

Are young Americans willing to participate in decision making relevant to their lives? A five-part exercise, *Making Decisions in School (AB01A-E)*, asks 9-year-olds to respond to a series of questions about decision making at school. Thirteen-year-olds, 17-year-olds and young adults were asked to respond to an open-ended exercise, *Should Teen-agers Decide on Courses? (RAB02)*, dealing with who should decide what courses students take. Another exercise, *Voting Behavior (UAB03)*, required people to reveal the basis upon which they would vote for a particular candidate.

Are young Americans willing to act in the general interest and not merely for personal gain? One exercise, *Do Something About the Way Neighborhood Looks (RAB10)*, probes this question at ages 13, 17 and young adult.

Do young Americans believe in the fundamental worth of the individual? Do they respect the views and feelings of other people? Do they weigh the effects of their behavior on others? These questions are approached in a variety of ways in such exercises as: *Cooperation in Social Situations (RKP19)*, *Cooperation in School (UKP20)*, *Class Consciousness (UAB12)*, *Making Fun of Religious Differences (RAR01)* and *Conformity to Peer Pressure (RAB13)*.

Do young Americans believe in the rule of law and legal protection for those accused of crimes? *Why Society Has Rules and Regulations (RKP21)*, *Legal Protection (UAB18)*, *Vandalism: Crime or Prank? (RAB20)* and *Rule of Law (UAB21)* are exercises that address these questions.

Whether or not young Americans believe in equal opportunity for all is covered in *Should Race Influence Employment? (RAB16)* and *Open Housing (RAB04)*.

Clearly no discreet group of exercises can definitely answer global questions such as those posed above. However, it is our hope that the results will at least provide some indication of American attitudes toward these issues. In a society in which guaranteed rights and citizens' responsibilities to uphold these rights are finely balanced, it is important to periodically take a reading of the scale.

Making Decisions in School (AB01A-E)

In this exercise, students were asked:

In school would you be willing to help decide the following things?

Of the five parts to this question, three have been released:

- B. *Would you be willing to help decide what your social studies report should be about?*
- D. *Would you be willing to help decide which children you should work with to do a project?*
- E. *Would you be willing to help decide whether you need some extra help in a subject?*

The percentages of "yes" answers in Table 1 indicate that about three out of four 9-year-olds were willing to participate in decision making relevant to their lives. Table 2 reveals that about the same proportion of 9-year-olds replied affirmatively on four of the five parts of the exercise.

TABLE 1
Percent of 9-Year-Olds Selecting Each Choice, Exercise AB01B,D,E, Making Decisions in School

Choices	Part B	Part D	Part E
Yes	73%	78%	81%
No	23	19	15
I don't know	4	3	4
No response	0	0	0

TABLE 2
Percent of 9-Year-Old "Yes" Responses on Five Parts of Exercise AB01, Making Decisions in School

Number of "Yes" Responses Out of Five	Percent
One	99
Two	97
Three	88
Four	70
Exactly five	42

Should Teen-agers Decide on Courses? (RAB02)

Thirteen-year-olds, 17-year-olds and young adults were given the following question:

A. Do you think that teen-age students should help decide what courses will be offered in their school system?
B. Please give a reason for any answer you selected.

Thirteen-year-olds (82%) and 17-year-olds (93%) answered "yes" to part A more frequently than adults (Table 3). Only 67% of the adults felt that students should help decide what courses would be offered.

The percentages of acceptable answers in part B still indicated that 17-year-olds believed most strongly that people should become involved in making decisions that affect them. Eighty-five percent of the 17-year-olds, 64% of the 13-year-olds and 60% of the young adults gave acceptable reasons for their answers to part A.

TABLE 3
Percent of Respondents Selecting Each Choice, Exercise RAB02 Part A, Should Teen-agers Decide on Courses?

Choices	Age 13	Age 17	Adult
Yes	82%	93%	67%
No	11	3	22
Undecided	7	4	11
No response	0	0	0

The most frequently mentioned reason 13 and 17-year-olds gave for their "yes" responses was that courses are for students, students know best what they want or enjoy and, therefore, they should have the right to help decide. Twenty-eight percent of the 13-year-olds and 34% of the 17-year-olds gave responses of this kind. The reasons cited by 13-year-olds often were weak. Many respondents seemed to interpret the question as reading, "Should a student pick out courses that he should take?" The question was intended to ask whether students should help decide what courses will be offered in their school system. "I think the student should get his own choice of his classes" was a typical response for those who misinterpreted the question.

Seventeen-year-olds usually read the question correctly and gave as their reason for a "yes" response an individual's "right to help decide." Expressing the feelings of many, one teen-ager said, "The student should have a part in this because the students are the ones who have to take the course."

Another stated his case more strongly, "We're the ones that know the most about the school, are the majority of the school and have to take the course so we should decide what we need."

Others doubted the premise that their elders knew what was best for them. Why should students help decide? "Because the students are the ones who are taking these courses and they know what they would enjoy taking over an older person who goes by statistics," explained one 17-year-old.

Another added that "students are much closer to goings-on than others and since they are in a position and are the one who should benefit, their opinion or suggestions should be considered carefully."

Finally, one 17-year-old expressed his confidence in teen-agers, but also a willingness to accept advice in making a pragmatic decision about the future. Most teen-agers "are very mature and smart," he argued. "They are the ones that have to take the course. Your guidance counselor would probably know everyone well enough. I think maybe there should be some guidance so you will take what is needed to get into college or business!" he said.

Considerably fewer adults (19%) gave reasons of this sort. Their replies were brief and to the point. "The students should be able to decide what courses they are taking instead of what's assigned to them," said one adult. "The students are the ones who have to study them," reasoned another. Another stated simply, "Because they know what they want to study."

Twenty-two percent in the age 13 group thought students would be more motivated and enjoy class more if they helped decide what courses were to be offered. "If the students have a say in the matter then the classes would be more interesting for them and they'd probably learn more because it is something they want to learn," said one student. Another assumed the worst when he wrote "if they have to take any subjects that they don't like they will flunk it." One 13-year-old replied that "there is some classes they just don't like and if they don't have to take they aren't going to but if they have to but they don't want to they will probably just skip the class then anyway."[1]

Slightly fewer 17-year-olds (19%) and young adults (17%) offered similar reasons. Repeatedly, 17-year-olds mentioned that if students were allowed to help select the courses, they would be "more interested in the subjects" and "maybe they would work harder." Many of their comments included criticisms of the educational system. "If the courses were offered," explained one, "I believe students would get more out of school and maybe even like school."

Another 17-year-old argued that "the students know what interest them, and they are the ones who will have to take the courses offered. The school faculty cannot know what extra courses students may want to take. If students choose the subjects they will obviously be more receptive and learn more." One respondent favored the students' right of selection, but felt that "there should be some required courses like History and English."

Adults also thought students "would be more interested" and "would want to learn more if they could help decide the courses." One young adult said that "it might help to keep more of them in school" or produce "better attendance."

"Education can and does affect the entire future of a person," wrote a 17-year-old. His concern was shared by many of his age group since "knowledge of or concern about the future" was the second most frequently listed response (29%) of 17-year-olds (see Table 4). "The student should be able to choose because he should map his own future by the courses he wished to be offered" was a common theme. Many felt that it is the students themselves who "know better what they need and want to take." Nineteen percent of the adults gave similar responses, arguing that "a teen-ager is old enough to know what courses he needs to have for college or just for the type of work (field) he plans to enter." Only 9% of the 13-year-olds expressed reasons in this category.

Many adults expressed doubt about the students' maturity to make such decisions and confidence in the superior ability of adults and educators to know what was best. "They are

[1]Throughout the text, responses are reproduced precisely as they were written, with no corrections of misspellings and grammatical errors.

too young to know what is best for them," pointed out one adult. Others agreed that, "That age group does not realize what the world will require of them, therefore, they cannot possibly know what they need to be prepared to compete and work to make their lives more meaningful." "A more beneficial decision would come after adulthood" was one cautious conclusion.

Ten percent of the 13-year-olds gave responses in this category but with somewhat different reasons. Some thought "the school should be the one to decide" and that the students should realize that "they come to school to learn not to show the teacher or the principal how to run the school." One student worried that "if you let them pick they'd pick the easy subjects and would not be learning much." Another thought there would be "too much confusion."

One 13-year-old gave his practical reason for saying no: "Because if they decide the course it will be made of all the subjects they like and they will not learn what they don't like which they have to learn for a good job." This association is certainly interesting—that a "good job" is closely tied to learning "what they don't like." Only 3% of the 17-year-olds answered in this category, and those who did doubted how wisely students would select courses. Most 17-year-olds, however, seemed to have every confidence in their own abilities and were very willing to become involved in making decisions that affect them (see Table 4).

TABLE 4
Percent of Respondents Giving Various Reasons Why Teen-agers Should or Should Not Decide on Courses, Exercise RAB02 Part B

Reasons	Age 13	Age 17	Adult
Courses are for students; students know what people their age want or enjoy; should have right to help	28%	34%	19%
Motivates students more—makes classes more enjoyable	22	19	17
Knowledge of or concern about the future	9	29	19
Improvement of curriculum—better education	2	2	3
It is a learning experience in taking responsibility—decision making	1	1	2
Better student-teacher relationship	0	0	0
Other acceptable	2	1	2
Any reason given when respondent marks "no" to part A, except "I don't know"	10	3	22
Yes, but gives unfavorable criticism of existing system	2	2	1
Undecided to part A with negative response (reason) in part B	1	1	4
Vague, nonsensical and other unacceptable responses	16	7	10
I don't know	4	1	2
No response	3	1	2

Percentages not equaling 100 percent are due to rounding error

Voting Behavior (UAB03)

In an unreleased exercise dealing with voting behavior, 13-year-olds, 17-year-olds and young adults were presented with the characteristics of two candidates for office. They were asked to choose between the candidates and defend their decision. Eighty-five percent of the adults answered acceptably and gave a reason; the figures were 72% for the 17-year-olds and 57% for the 13-year-olds. In general, the responses of 13-year-olds reflected their lack of interest in and concern for the responsibilities that accompany the right to vote.

Do Something About the Way Neighborhood Looks (RAB10)

Exercise RAB10 was designed to determine the extent to which young people and

adults demonstrate a sense of civic duty and responsibility for the interests of others. Ages 13, 17 and young adult were shown the picture below and then asked the following:

A. *If this picture were taken in a neighborhood other than your own, would you want something done about the way things look?*
B. *Please give a reason for your answer.*
C. *Tell me two ways of removing conditions of poverty such as those shown in the picture. Please be as specific as possible.*

Nearly all of the respondents (99% of the 13-year-olds, 94% of the 17-year-olds and 94% of the adults) wanted "something done about the way things look." Most (89% of the 13-year-olds, 86% of the 17-year-olds and 86% of the adults) gave acceptable reasons for their answer.

The most frequently mentioned reason at all age levels—age 13 (44%), age 17 (54%) and young adult (49%)—was concern for the physical and psychological welfare of the people living in the houses. One 13-year-old thought it "a disgrace to have people living there. It's a breeding place for bacteria and kills people off. It isn't very pretty for the neighborhood either." Another said, "It needs to be cleaned up. These people probably need to be on welfare so they can have better homes." "I don't think people should live like this" and "it isn't fair that those people should have to live like that" were common themes. "I wouldn't want to live like that," admitted one respondent. Seventeen-year-olds expressed similar feelings. One commented that "people should have a decent place to live. Not just upper and middle class people." This respondent also questioned the country's priorities: "The money spent on the moon trips should be spent to help the poor people." Another student worried whether the situation might not tarnish America's image abroad: "It would run down the American if a foreign person would see that. They think Americans have a better education but that would run it down." The adults also were concerned, stressing the "unsightly" and "unsanitary" aspects of the scene.

A high percentage of respondents in each group—age 13 (39%), age 17 (29%) and adult (33%)—expressed their concern for the appearance of the community. "It makes the whole neighborhood look bad," complained the adults. "Clean it up. It looks like a slum area." "It looks like we are a poor nation. Couldn't we use part of urban renewal plan here?" asked a 17-year-old. Another simply commented, "Doesn't look like the American life." But it was the 13-year-olds who were most concerned about the appearance. Among their observations were: "It is not nice to see slums like this—it looks like a city dump." "It doesn't blend with the rest of the town; it detracts from the rest; it brings rats." "One

neighborhood makes the other look bad." "It brings down property values." Interestingly, only 1% of the 17-year-olds mentioned civic duty as the reason for doing something about this situation (see Table 5).

TABLE 5
Percent of Respondents Giving Various Reasons for Doing Something About Neighborhood Appearance, Exercise RAB10 Part B

Reasons	Age 13	Age 17	Adult
Concern for welfare of people living there (physical and/or psychological)	44%	51%	49%
Concern for appearance of the community	39	29	33
Need for new facilities (park, homes, school)	3	1	1
Civic duty	0	1	0
Other acceptable	4	2	3
Any reason when student gives "no" to part A	0	3	3
Vague, nonsensical or other unacceptable responses	9	8	9
I don't know	0	0	0
No response	1	0	0

The variety of responses indicated that perhaps the picture selected for this exercise misled some respondents. It generally was interpreted in these three ways: (1) an area where poor people live, (2) a deserted area and (3) an area either inhabited or deserted on the left (close houses) with a nice area behind it (back right). The different interpretations probably influenced the answers to parts B and C.

The varying interpretations also created problems in scoring. For example, many students who thought the house was deserted suggested in part C that it be torn down, a

TABLE 6
Percent of Respondents Suggesting Various Ways to Remove Poverty, Exercise RAB10 Part C, Do Something About the Way Neighborhood Looks

Ways to Remove Poverty	Age 13	Age 17	Adult
Provide for quality education and training	4%	12%	25%
Increase opportunity for employment	11	24	25
Reconstruct or repair housing in the area	44	40	32
Improve community services	1	1	1
Tear down houses and beautify	4	3	4
Reorder national priorities	1	4	1
Government aid (any level)	12	18	20
Provide legal protection	0	0	0
Eliminate discrimination	0	0	0
Other acceptable responses	26	20	18
Beautification changes	26	18	15
Major physical changes	11	6	8
Changes that do not assure that conditions of poverty will be removed	4	10	9
Changes which reflect lack of concern for people in poverty areas	3	4	5
There is nothing that we can do	0	0	0
Other unacceptable	14	10	14
No response	14	13	9

logical action. Yet this answer was categorized under "changes that do not assure that conditions of poverty will be removed." Similarly, other responses were coded unacceptab'e, which, when viewed as part of the student's total response, were entirely logical answers.

In part C the respondents were asked to list "two ways of removing conditions of poverty such as those shown in the picture." The suggested methods are given in Table 6.

Among the ways listed of removing the conditions of poverty, reconstruction or repair of housing in the area was mentioned most frequently by all age groups. Twenty-five percent of the adults and 24% of the 17-year-olds mentioned increased opportunitues for employment at least once as compared with 11% of the 13-year-olds. Adults also were more likely to suggest providing for quality education and government aid at any level.

The percentages of acceptable responses to part C, listing ways to remove poverty, are given in Table 7:

One can conclude that all ages demonstrated a theoretical sense of responsibility for the interests of others by expressing a desire to remove conditions of poverty, and most people supported this desire by offering ways of removing such conditions. Nearly all of the respondents wanted "something done about the way things look" and most gave an acceptable reason for their answer. Finally, although less than half in each age group could offer two acceptable ways to remove poverty, most could present at least one acceptable way.

TABLE 7
Percent of Respondents Suggesting Acceptable Ways to Remove Poverty, Exercise RAB10 Part C, Do Something About the Way Neighborhood Looks

Number of Acceptable Responses	Age 13	Age 17	Adult
None	19%	12%	14%
Exactly one	46	43	41
Exactly two	33	42	45
At least one	79	85	86

Cooperation in Social Situations (RKP19)

Do children understand the necessity for cooperating in social situations? To determine this, 9-year-olds were given the following situation:

> *Bob and Tom are playing. They have three balls, a game and some other toys. But both Bob and Tom want to play with the same ball and they do not want to play together. So they begin to fight.*
>
> *Which one of the following is the problem here?*

The choices were (1) There are not enough toys, (2) Bob and Tom should be working, not playing, (3) Bob and Tom should watch television instead and (4) Bob and Tom don't know how to share their toys. Ninety-two percent of the 9-year-olds gave the most socially acceptable answer (Table 8).

TABLE 8
Percent of 9-Year-Olds Selecting Each Choice, Exercise RKP19, Cooperation in Social Situations

Choices	Percent
There are not enough toys	4
Bob and Tom should be working, not playing	2
Bob and Tom should watch television instead	1
Bob and Tom don't know how to share their toys	92
I don't know	1
No response	0

Cooperation in School (UKP20)

In an unreleased exercise concerning the effects of one's actions on his schoolmates, 97% of the 9-year-olds gave answers which indicated they understood the necessity for rules in school.

Class Consciousness (UAB12)

In another unreleased exercise, 9 and 13-year-olds were indirectly asked if differing backgrounds between two boys' parents should prevent the boys from playing together. Ninety-five percent of the 9-year-olds and 98% of the 13-year-olds thought the boys should have the right to play together. However, only 27% of the 9-year-olds gave an acceptable reason, as compared to 68% of the 13-year-olds.

Making Fun of Religious Differences (RAR01)

To see if young Americans recognize the principle of the individual's right to freedom of worship, 9, 13 and 17-year-olds were given this situation:

> *Suppose Jane is making fun of someone because his religion is not the same as hers.*
>
> *A. What would you say to Jane?*
> *B. Why would you say this?*

With both parts scored as a unit, 91% of the 17-year-olds, 87% of the 13-year-olds and 73% of the age 9 group gave acceptable responses. Their reasons are given below (Table 9), accompanied by the percentages of respondents in each age group who gave answers of various kinds.

TABLE 9
Percent of Respondents Giving Various Reasons for Their Reaction to Jane's Intolerance, Exercise RAR01 Part B, Making Fun of Religious Differences

Reasons	Age 9	Age 13	Age 17
Reason showing religious tolerance (may also show concern about hurt feelings)	42%	55%	53%
Reason expressing concern for feelings of individual only	28	17	5
Reason citing right to freedom of worship	2	16	33
Vague, nonsensical and other unacceptable responses	19	10	8
I don't know	4	1	1
No response	5	2	1

Only 2% of the 9-year-olds explicitly stated the right to freedom of worship as their reason for condemning Jane's action. One referred to the Constitution in the statement, "They can be whatever religion they want to because it's a free country ever since the Bill of Rights." More typical were such responses as, "That's not right because everyone has a right to go to his own church," "Jane, everyone has the right to go to the church of their own choice" or "It is a free world and they can pick the religion they would like to pick." What is unclear, however, is whether the 9-year-olds really understand that the freedom of worship is guaranteed in the Bill of Rights or whether they believe it is some kind of natural worldwide right proclaimed everywhere and enjoyed by "everyone" in this "free world." One simply cannot tell from these responses.

The 9-year-olds seemed especially sensitive to the individual's feelings. Repeatedly they explained "it's not nice" to tease or "to make fun" of people. The following answer expressed the attitude of many: "Not to tease—tell her, I wouldn't do that, if I were you. I don't like to hear teasing, because it makes the other kids embarrassed and makes them feel bad and sometimes when you tease, you get teased back." Not everyone was so charitable: "Twinkle, Twinkle little Star, what you say is what you are. Cause she's been saying ugly stuff to other people and I'd pay her back for what she'd been saying." But most were brief and to the point. "Stop teasing him. It's not nice." "Ask her how she'd like to be made fun of."

The largest category of responses cited religious tolerance and were often accompanied by expressions of concern for the individual's feelings. "That isn't nice. It's not right to make fun of someone who believes in another religion," pointed out one 9-year-old. "Stop it. Some people have different religions. Everybody is different but you shouldn't make fun," explained another. Some offered statements which indicated that underneath their religious tolerance was the assumption that all worshiped the same God anyway. "It doesn't really matter and you really shouldn't laugh. As long as you are learning about God." "That's not nice. They might believe in God just as much as she does." Others noted that the child's religion was a matter over which he had no control. "Don't make fun of him. He can't help it and he may like his religion better than hers."

Nineteen percent of the 9-year-olds gave "vague, nonsensical, unacceptable responses." These answers seem to have no distinguishable patterns or themes. One youngster explained that "all churches are not alike. Because some churches are better than others. Because some you have to stand up inside and some you have a place to sit." Another student simply pondered, "I wonder what they think of us."

Thirteen-year-olds expressed many of the same attitudes and reasons that 9-year-olds did. A higher percentage (16%) explicitly mentioned the constitutional right to freedom of worship, but the majority (55%) cited religious tolerance as their reason for speaking to Jane as they did.

A few age 13 respondents expressed an attitude of religious tolerance and then added statements like "they can't help what religion they are. . . ." Another student seemed to qualify his endorsement of the right to freedom of worship by explaining, "It doesn't matter how his religion is—or how her religion is—they both still believe in God." Fewer 13-year-olds offered blanket statements about "everyone" enjoying the right to freedom of worship although one student said, "They can believe whatever they want to believe. It's a free world and anybody who wants to believe a thing can." Again, one simply does not know if the student is aware of the specific constitutional right or actually assumes that the freedom to worship is a right shared by all peoples.

The percentage of unacceptable responses (13%) was notably lower for 13-year-olds. Again, there were no apparent patterns. One student said he would say "nothing—it's none of my business." Another, who appeared somewhat belligerent, answered, "I wouldn't say anything. I'd slug her. I'd slug them to get their attention. Then they would listen to you, otherwise they wouldn't." Finally one 13-year-old explained his reluctance to offer a reason for his answer this way: "There are a lot of things, but I wouldn't want to say it here."

One third of the 17-year-olds cited the right to freedom of worship as the reason for their response. Seventeen-year-olds also spoke of freedom of religion as a universal right. "I think I would probably tell her to lay off," said one. "Everyone has the right to their own religion." Another wanted to tell Jane to "mind her own business" and added that "people have the freedom of religion." But the 17-year-olds differed from the two younger groups in their recognition of the constitutional right at issue. "Jane he believes differently than you and in this country that is one of our rights," argued one student. Another pointed out that "in United States we still have Freedom of Religion." Other respondents who showed a recognition of the constitutional right stated: "Because we have freedom of religion in the U.S." and "There's a law that says everyone has freedom of religion." One 17-year-old mentioned the constitutional right and then elaborated on her own personal feelings. "I would tell her that in this country we have freedom to believe in what religion we want to

and not to make fun of her. Her religion could be just as good as Jane's. I would tell Jane that Jesus would be ashamed of her making fun of the other girl. It's the truth. Maybe she would stop if she knew Jesus would be ashamed of her." Others, although sometimes inaccurate, showed an historical awareness of the tradition of religious freedom in America. "Freedom of religion is something we have always had and even though they different opinions they are all for the same purpose." Another stated with conviction, "To Jane I would say Jesus Christ did not believe the same way as you do and neither do I why do you have to make fun of something that this country was founded upon."

A majority (53%) in the age 17 group cited religious tolerance as their reason. Many of these also expressed concern for the individual's feelings, although just 5% of the 17-year-olds gave responses showing concern for feelings of the individual only. Some who expressed religious tolerance obviously had experienced religious discrimination themselves. "Tell her to mind her own business," said one. "I have a different religion and I know how it feels." "Tell Jane she was very narrow minded and belonged back in the 13th century. I personally know what it is to be discriminated against because of my religion," was another comment. Again, expressions of religious tolerance often were accompanied by the supposition that in spite of whatever differences might exist among religions, "Its the same God" anyway. One student explained, "She shouldn't do it. We all believe in God and each worships as he/she choses." One thought Jane "shouldn't open her mouth about it because there are many religions in the world and some people worship many gods and some do not." This recognition, that there might be more than one God, was exceptional.

Seventeen-year-olds seemed to realize that discussions of religion can end in arguments. One feared that if Jane "keeps on she could cause a racial and/or religious problem or fight." Some who gave reasons which were scored as unacceptable shared this attitude. "I probably wouldn't say anything. I'd just ignore her. I wouldn't want to get involved in an argument on religion." Another explained his position by saying, "I'd probably keep out of it and not say anything. It'd just cause a big fight probably." One student answered "nothing, because she's making a fool of herself"; another replied, "That's not my problem—that's her business." A rather pessimistic reply was, "I would ignore her. People that are dumb enough to say something like that. Nothing you can say will help them."

It is difficult to determine from these comments whether 17-year-olds are more callous or whether they in fact have a greater understanding than the younger respondents. One 17-year-old remarked, "I wouldn't say anything. I'd let him stick up for his own religion. People should stick up for themselves without depending on others." Does this imply a desire to escape involvement and responsibility or is there wisdom in his stress on independence and self-reliance? What is clear is that the 17-year-olds have a better understanding of their constitutional right to freedom of worship than the younger respondents. One third of the 17-year-olds mentioned the right to freedom of worship as their reason while only 16% of the 13-year-olds and 2% of the 9-year-olds gave responses in this category. However, one cannot conclude that these were the only students who were aware of and understood the constitutional right to freedom of worship. Others may have been knowledgeable of the constitutional principle involved although they gave other acceptable responses.

Conformity to Peer Pressure (RAB13)

In Exercise RAB13, the following situation was posed:

A. Suppose one of your friends disagrees with the rest of the group about something. Do you think he should change his mind when he sees he is outnumbered?
B. Why do you think so?

The results by age are listed in Table 10.

TABLE 10
Percent of Respondents Selecting Each Choice, Exercise RAB13 Part A, Conformity to Peer Pressure

Choices	Age 9	Age 13	Age 17	Adult
Yes	56%	16%	7%	4%
No	40	79	89	92
Undecided	4	5	4	3
No response	1	0	0	1

TABLE 11
Percent of Respondents Giving Acceptable Reasons Why a Friend Should or Should Not Conform, Exercise RAB13 Part B

Reasons	Age 9	Age 13	Age 17	Adult
Acceptable	30%	71%	84%	89%
Unacceptable	61	26	16	10
No response	9	3	1	1

It was the adults who most staunchly upheld the individual's right to dissent (Table 10) and who most frequently defended their viewpoint with an acceptable reason (Table 11). Nine-year-olds were more willing to conform and less able to give an acceptable explanation for their position.

TABLE 12
Percent of Respondents Giving Various Reasons Why a Friend Should or Should Not Conform, Exercise RAB13 Part B

Reasons	Age 9	Age 13	Age 17	Adult
We should stand up for individual beliefs	14%	40%	50%	37%
We all have a right to disagree or to have our own opinions	2	11	21	28
He may be right; we may be wrong	10	16	7	13
Conditional: should not conform unless disagreeing would result in holding up an important group task	1	0	1	0
Conditional: should not conform unless disagreeing would result in some type of violence	1	0	0	0
Conditional: should not conform unless the viewpoint has been proven incorrect beyond any doubt	1	4	3	9
Other acceptable	1	1	2	2
Responses which indicate he should change his mind (other than conditional answers given above)	39	12	5	4
Vague, nonsensical, other unacceptable responses	16	12	10	6
I don't know	6	2	0	0
No response	9	3	1	1

The wide discrepancy in percentages suggests that 9-year-olds were more sensitive to peer pressures than the older respondents (Table 12). Thirteen (40%) and 17-year-olds (50%) most frequently mentioned that one should "stand up for individual beliefs." "I think if a person says something and he believes in it, he should stay with it even if he is laughed at or put down for his thoughts," wrote a 13-year-old. A 17-year-old explained, "He'd just be accepting what someone else put to his mind and not expressing his own thoughts. I don't like the idea of someone thinking for me." Another 17-year-old succinctly stated his view by writing that "a person should stick to what he believes." Thirty-seven percent of the adults gave similar replies: "This is part of being an American. Think independently. This is called doing your thing." Only 14% of the 9-year-olds offered responses of a like nature. The adults (28%) most frequently cited the "right to disagree; to have one's own opinion," followed by 17-year-olds (21%), 13-year-olds (11%) and 9-year-olds (2%). Perhaps this indicates, as it has in some other exercises, that the adults are more knowledgeable of their constitutional rights than the younger respondents.

A number of responses were considered unacceptable although they were supportive of the democratic rule by majority. Some respondents of all ages interpreted the question as asking whether one should abide by the majority's decision. A 9-year-old said, "The others

should get their way there are more of them." Thirteen-year-olds wrote, "He should take his own opinion but the majority rules" and "Because if the majority wants to he has to go with the majority." "The whole group shouldn't have to change," answered a 17-year-old, "he should change for the majority." An adult simply replied, "I believe in a majority rule."

One percent of the 9-year-olds expressed their concern about violence erupting because of the individual's continuing disagreement with the majority. "If he didn't agree, some people might not like him and beat him up," wrote one youngster. "He might get hurt if someone bigger than he is disagrees with him," said another. One 9-year-old cautioned that "the people in my class are mean and they might beat him up." A 13-year-old suggested this compromise for the dilemma: "He should give his reasons for the disagreement and he should try to give in a little bit with the class and the class should give in a little bit with him and they should come about mid-way with their terms."

In spite of the ambiguities, it appears that 9-year-olds were subject to greater peer pressures than the other age groups. The adults were most willing to uphold the right of dissent and perhaps were more knowledgeable of their constitutional right to disagree.

Why Society Has Rules and Regulations (RKP21)

Thirteen-year-olds, 17-year-olds and young adults were asked:

Why does every society have rules and regulations?

Seventeen-year-olds had the highest percentage of acceptable answers followed by adults and 13-year-olds (Table 13).

The individual responses are categorized in Table 14.

TABLE 13
Percent of Respondents Giving Acceptable Reasons Why Society Has Rules, Exercise RKP21

Reasons	Age 13	Age 17	Adult
Acceptable	67%	84%	69%
Unacceptable	30	16	29
No response	3	1	2

TABLE 14
Percent of Respondents Giving Various Reasons Why Society Has Rules, Exercise RKP21

Reasons	Age 13	Age 17	Adult
To protect life and/or property	34%	40%	24%
To maintain order (prevent disorder) or facilitate organization	25	28	27
To protect freedom, liberty or justice	4	8	9
To prevent friction; settle disputes. Keep people from bothering each other	1	1	2
Other acceptable	3	6	7
States results of rules and regulations, not reason for having them	4	1	2
Statement indicating rules are made for or against a particular group	0	0	0
Vague, irrelevant and nonsensical responses	18	12	25
I don't know	9	3	2
No response	3	1	2

More than one third of the 13-year-olds and two fifths of the 17-year-olds cited reasons for protecting life and property as their answer. Many mentioned their concern about crime and violence. Thirteen-year-olds thought that "if there were no rules it wouldn't be safe to walk the streets that's why there's rules" or "if we didn't have them their would be a lot of crime etc. and it wouldn't be a good place to live because if someone tried to kill your child he wouldn't get punished." "If there isn't any everyone would do what they wanted to do," argued a 17-year-old. "There would be a lot of crime." One adult wrote, "If it weren't for

the rules and regulations the land would be over run by lawlessness." Twenty-four percent of the young adults gave responses in this category.

Twenty-seven percent of the adults cited reasons for maintaining order or facilitating organization. "Society could not function without them," wrote one adult. "There would be chaos and people would revert to a barbaric state." Another responded, "Without rules and regulations there would be complete chaos and we would return to the jungle and/or stone age." "If we don't have rules and regulations in school and at home how are adolescents expected to grow up and live in society?" asked an adult. About the same number of 13-year-olds (25%) and 17-year-olds (28%) gave similar responses. "Every society has rules and regulations because there is a need to prevent chaos. The animal instinct in all of us is needed to be suppressed by rules and regulations. Some act of order is needed to survive," wrote a 13-year-old. A 17-year-old claimed, "Every society needs rules and regulations to give its citizens an ordered and safe atmosphere in which to live. A society without rules and regulations would be complete chaos and dangerous to live in." Another remarked, "A society has rules and regulations so that the people can be controlled in a reasonable manner. This of course doesn't mean that the people should be unordinarily suppressed by the government." The need for "control over the people" was mentioned frequently by 17-year-olds in this category.

The third most common response listed reasons for protecting freedom, liberty or justice. Four percent of the 13-year-olds, 8% of the 17-year-olds and 9% of the adults gave responses in this category. Why should there be rules and regulations? "In order that each person regardless of race, religion, or creed may have the same privileges," said a 17-year-old, who added, "Also that each person may know what he is allowed to do in the society in which he lives." "To protect the rights of everyone else in the society" was another response. An adult replied, "In any society there are a few who would infringe upon the right of the majority. To govern the conduct of the few is the purpose of rules and regulations." Another said, "To prevent utter chaos there must be reasonable limitations to what individuals are allowed to do. Otherwise some people would infringe on the rights of others since some people are inclined to act responsibly while others are not." One of the more interesting responses came from a 17-year-old: "For 'social cohesion,' " he wrote. "To help man restrict himself out of his 'State of Nature' for the mutual benefit and protection of all. You can refer to Mr. Locke and Mr. Roussea. Very interesting."

Many of the unacceptable responses resulted from a misunderstanding of the word "society." Some respondents at each age interpreted society to mean a club such as the Audubon Society. "Every society has rules and regulations," wrote a 13-year-old, "because if there where no rules or regulations they would be disorganized and wouldn't have to come to meetings or important business." A 17-year-old thought the rules and regulations were "so they can follow them and not have a bad organization. If they didn't this will probably get more people to join." "To have a better society, an so it can be run smoothly without trouble an interuptions, that is the idea for a club, etc.," said an adult.

The percentages indicate that 17-year-olds seem to have a better understanding of society's needs for rules and regulations. Even the answers scored as unacceptable reflected awareness and common sense at times. Why should a society have rules and regulations? "Because if it didn't," concluded a 17-year-old, "it wouldn't be fit for a dog to live in."

Legal Protections (UAB18)

In an unreleased exercise concerned with how society should deal with a person accused of a crime, a large majority of the respondents supported legal protections for persons accused of crimes. Eighty-nine percent of the 17-year-olds, 86% of the 13-year-olds and 83% of the adults upheld the principle that guilt or innocence must be established in a court of law. At least three out of four people at each age level gave acceptable reasons for their answers.

Vandalism: Crime or Prank? (RAB20)

Thirteen and 17-year-olds watched the film, *Vandalism: Crime or Prank?* After viewing the film, they were asked to answer some questions based upon it. A brief synopsis of the film follows:

> *Vandalism: Crime or Prank?* explores the question of whether vandalism is a crime or a prank, and whether an adult who witnesses such an act and recognizes one of the participants has an obligation to report the matter to either the police or to the boy's parents.
>
> Mr. Frank Norris, returning home from an errand early one evening, sees a group of boys destroying a statue in a park near his home. Running toward the group, he scuffles briefly with one of the boys, Jimmy Tyler, whom he recognizes as the 12-year-old son of one of his friends and neighbors.
>
> All night long he wrestles with the question of whether or not he should notify either the police or Jimmy's father. At breakfast the following morning he discusses the affair with his wife and encounters a strong difference of opinion.
>
> It is Mr. Norris' position that vandalism in any form is a crime, that the destruction of the statue was a senseless and vicious act of vandalism, and that he has an obligation to report the matter. He believes that one such act of vandalism might well lead to others and that he cannot afford to simply sit idly by and do nothing.
>
> Mrs. Norris considers the act to have been a prank rather than a crime, a thing that boys, unfortunately, do but something they will outgrow later. She reminds her husband that he has told her stories of similar escapades that he performed while he was in his teens, and she tells him that if he calls Mr. Tyler he will do nothing other than destroy their friendship and get Jimmy into unnecessary trouble. She urges him to do nothing and forget the incident.

The movie makes every effort to present the conflicting arguments both sympathetically and convincingly. As the film ends, Mr. and Mrs. Norris are still debating their respective points of view. It is left to the respondent to determine the merits of their respective positions.

After viewing the film, students were asked:

A. *Should Mr. Norris have done something about what he saw taking place in the park?*
B. *Please give a reason for any answer you selected.*
C. *Do you think there should be laws against acts of vandalism such as destroying a statue?*
D. *If you saw one of your friends committing an act of vandalism, what would you do?*

Eighty-eight percent of the 13-year-olds and 87% of the 17-year-olds thought Mr. Norris should have done something about what he saw taking place in the park. Seventy-four percent in both age groups offered acceptable reasons in part B. These responses are categorized in Table 15.

The most common response at both ages showed a concern for preventing more trouble, either for the boys or society. Many of these answers came from an alternative mentioned by Mr. Norris in the film. "As it said in the film if he doesn't do or say anything it might lead to more and bigger things," wrote a 13-year-old. Other responses of a similar

TABLE 15
Percent of Respondents Giving Various Reasons Why Vandalism Should or Should Not Be Reported, Exercise RAB20 Part B, Vandalism: Crime or Prank?

Reasons	Age 13	Age 17
To prevent more trouble—for boys or society	45%	40%
Crime was being committed	12	11
Public property	8	7
Citizen's duty	4	10
Other acceptable (could have any response to part A)	5	6
Mr. Norris could have endangered himself	0	0
Boys were having fun	1	2
Not his concern	1	1
Could damage boys' future	0	1
Tells what Mr. Norris should do, not why	8	11
Vague, nonsensical and other unacceptable responses	14	11
I don't know	1	0
No response	1	1

nature were: "The vandalism should have been reported to discourage any actions of the same nature" or "If he would have said something they wouldn't do any thing any more." Another 13-year-old noted that "if some one tore down something that was your's you would want them to be punished so he won't do it again." A 17-year-old wrote, "I think Mr. Norris was right in what he said, 'They can do it again, another time.' Maybe if they would have been reported they would have gotten scared and would never do anything of the sort again. I think Mr. Norris should have held on to the boy." Another youth was concerned that "the kids will just keep doing it and in time will end up getting caught. Thus leading to a life of imprisonment. If people let kids get away with everything, when they grow up the world around us will be disastrous to live in."

Eleven percent at age 17 and 12 percent at age 13 responded by citing the fact that a crime had been committed. Thirteen-year-olds thought Mr. Norris should have said something "because vandalism is a crime and people who commit a crime that does damage to the public good should be punished." Others argued, "Because there was a crime commited and they should be reported to the police." A 17-year-old stressed that "they committed a crime and broke the law. No matter how small in value they still broke the law." Another said, "Vandalism is a crime and should be reported to the police, especially if you know who did it. It may not seem bad if it happens to someone else but it is when it happens to you."

Other acceptable responses mentioned public property and a citizen's duty. Thirteen-year-olds stated: "He should have turn the boy in because the statue that they were breaking was in a public park and it belongs to everybody." "Because he's an American citizen and he should report what happen so the same bunch won't do it again. It is his duty to do so for he was there and saw what happened." Fewer 17-year-olds expressed a concern for public property, while more mentioned the citizen's duty. "The boys were destroying property senselessly," answered a 13-year-old. "Why should the taxpayers have to pay for a few little idiots messing around? I think he should go to the parents not the police."

One youth replied, "I feel that as a citizen we each have obligations to our community and country. The statue was an object that all the people in the town could look at and appreciate. The next time the gang of boys got together, they might not just harm a statue. It might be a human life. They should definitely be punished for this." Another 17-year-old was concerned that "if no one took part in things like this it would be very hard for the police." Finally, one 17-year-old said, "I think he should have done something because it just isn't right to destroy a statue. Their interesting to look at and probably not to easy to make."

The types and percentages of unacceptable responses were similar for both ages. A small number were worried that Mr. Norris would physically endanger himself and his

family by his actions. "If he would have said something the boy might have ganged up on him or something" and "He would probably make enemies and the kids may do something to his house and family" were typical responses for 13-year-olds. One other added that "he should not have tried to stop it because he might get hurt. He should have reported it to the police." A few 17-year-olds thought Mr. Norris should not get involved "because if the person who has done the vandalism, know the people that turn him in, he might turn around and do the same thing to them or something even worse."

Others argued that Mr. Norris should not concern himself because the boys "were just having fun like any other person. And he probably did something when he was a boy too." A 17-year-old felt lenient because he considered "the act as more of a prank and something that young kids eventually grow out of." Another wrote, "It's more important to keep friends than to make enemies. Mr. Norris wouldn't have liked it if it was his own son who was only fooling around. It's normal for boys to get into trouble. Mr. Norris probably done something similar to this (breaking statue) when he was young."

Some thought "he should mind his own business" and stated that "he should have left them alone and let the law tend to it." Others were worried that he would damage the boys' future "because turning those kids in for a stupid prank could hamper their chances of employment. He could have told the parents." Many of the respondents suggested this alternative in a more acceptable manner—that Mr. Norris tell the boy's parents and that they then resolve the dilemma.

Among the other unacceptable responses were: "I feel that if the kids were so dumb to have somebody catch them they should pay for what they did." "They didn't have to wreck a statue that would be hard to replace. If they just tripped it over or moved it somewhere, it wouldn't be so bad." A 13-year-old offered this criticism: "Should have given more time to think about the movie and that the movie should of been longer and have more views stressed."

TABLE 16

Percent of Respondents Taking Various Courses of Action If They Saw a Friend Committing an Act of Vandalism, Exercise RAB20 Part D, Vandalism: Crime or Prank?

Courses of Action	Age 13	Age 17
Try to reason with him or talk him out of it	23%	33%
Report act to authorities (police, park attendants, school principal)	18	9
Inform his own parents	9	3
Inform the friend's parents	10	4
Make friend promise to report it on his own to authorities or to parents	1	5
Stop him from continuing damage by threatening to report him to the authorities or parents	3	3
Report it to a person who understands teenagers (counselor, social worker, minister, teacher)	0	0
Physically try to stop him from continuing to vandalize	0	0
Other acceptable responses	10	11
Not get involved—mentions friendship	4	3
Not get involved—mentions other reason or no reason given	6	5
If student thinks vandalism is serious he will take an acceptable action; if not, he won't	2	5
Vague, nonsensical, other unacceptable responses	12	18
I don't know	2	1
No response	1	0

In the second half of the exercise, 93% of the respondents in both age groups agreed that there should be laws against acts of vandalism such as destroying a statue. However, when asked, If you saw one of your friends committing an act of vandalism, what would you do? more than two thirds of the students—13-year-olds (74%), 17-year-olds (68%)—gave acceptable responses. These are categorized in Table 16.

Part D of this exercise placed the students in a greater dilemma than had part A. No longer was the question what *should* Mr. Norris do, but what *would* they do in a similar circumstance? The choice was obviously more difficult because of the theoretical personal involvement. The most common response was to try to reason with the friend or talk him out of it. A 13-year-old answered, "I would probably talk to him and reason with him to try and make him stop doing these things. If he didn't stop I would talk to his parents and if they didn t stop him I would report him to the police." The response was typical in that it outlined a number of increasingly difficult choices the respondent felt he would have to make.

Other students were willing, although often reluctant, to report the act of vandalism to their parents, to their friend's parents or to other authorities. The hypothetical situation obviously was taken seriously, for students often expressed their apprehensions over the results of informing on a friend. "I would tell my parents and see what they say," answered a 13-year-old, "but I would [not] tell the police because they would call you a fink and would turn all your friends against you." Another youth said, "I would report it to the police and tell them that I saw my friend doing it, but I wouldn't tell my name." The dilemma was expressed by another student this way: "I would hate to tell on them because they would probably hate me after that, but I would tell on them. I don't think they should get away with it." One 17-year-old offered his own unique solution to the problem: "If he were a good friend, I don't know if I'd turn him in, but I'd try to straighten him out, some way. Like maybe bust him in the mouth."

Some simply refused to report the incident for fear of losing a friend. Representative responses included: "If I seen one of my friends committing vandalism I wouldn't tell because he is one of my friends and he wouldn't tell on me." "If it was a close friend I probably wouldn't because I would be afraid to heart him." Other reasons for not getting involved were: "I would forget the whole thing. If my friend found out I told on him he might get mad and get other people to help him beat me up." A 17-year-old said he would do "nothing. I would do nothing because though I feel there should be a law against vandalism, I don't care about to any great extent about any one else's property except my own. In the case if the property was mine I would probably break the kid's neck or call the police." Another said, "It depends. If they were destroying something like a statue or breaking a public phone, I'd tell them to stop because it wasn't right. But I wouldn't make a big thing about a little writing on a wall."

A comparison of the responses to parts A and D revealed that 19% of the 13-year-olds and 25% of the 17-year-olds gave unacceptable answers to part D although they said yes to part A. One can possibly explain the differences by the working of the questions and the degree of personal involvement required. Part A asked, *Should* Mr. Norris have done something about what he saw taking place in the park? but part D asked, If *you* saw one of your friends committing an act of vandalism, what *would* you do? The students were less committed in part D because they were the ones required to act and because their actions might endanger a personal friendship. A 13-year-old expressed their dilemma when he wrote, "I would be caught between a gap, friendship or doing the right thing, reporting it to the authorities. I would be undecided."

Rule of Law (UAB21)

In an unreleased exercise, also dealing with an individual's responsibility to rule of law, 70% of the 17-year-olds and 91% of the adults answered acceptably. Adults seemed to take the situation more seriously than the 17-year-olds and felt more strongly their citizens' duty to support law enforcement.

Should Race Influence Employment? (RAB16)

In this exercise, 13-year-olds, 17-year-olds and young adults were asked:

A. Should race be a factor in hiring someone for a job?
B. Please give a reason for any answer you select.

Ninety percent of both 17-year-olds and young adults gave acceptable responses. Seventy-four percent of the 13-year-olds responded acceptably to the question (Table 17).

TABLE 17
Percent of Respondents Giving Acceptable Reasons Why Race Should or Should Not Be a Factor in Employment, Exercise RAB16 Part B

Reasons	Age 13	Age 17	Adult
Acceptable	74%	90%	90%
Unacceptable	22	9	9
No response	5	1	1

TABLE 18.
Percent of Respondents Giving Various Reasons Why Race Should or Should Not Be a Factor in Employment, Exercise RAB16 Part B

Reasons	Age 13	Age 17	Adult
Ability most important factor	31%	50%	61%
Equality and dignity important	22	20	12
Race does not (should not) matter	9	5	4
Legal protection against discrimination	2	4	5
Other acceptable	10	12	8
Conditional (except reference to ability)	0	1	2
Anti-racial statements	0	1	0
Unsupported assumptions	0	1	2
Respondent interprets race as a contest or speed factor	5	1	0
Vague, nonsensical and other unacceptable responses	10	4	4
I don't know	6	1	1
No response	5	1	1

As Table 18 shows, only a small percentage of the respondents cited reasons reflecting an awareness of the legal protections provided against racial discrimination. "According to the law everyone who is equally qualified must have an equal chance for employment." answered a 13-year-old. "As Americans we all have the rights of equal employment opportunities as afforded by our constitution," wrote a 17-year-old. Another responded, "Its against the persons constitutional rights if you refuse to hire him or her because of race. Its also against the law." The adults replied, "The constitution states their should be no discrimination among races" and "Theoretically, and constitutionally, a person should not be judged according to race, religion, or national origin." One adult explained at length, "It should be a part of one's civil rights that one should not be deprived equal economic opportunity because of race. The economy is a community activity & if private economic power is allowed to discriminate by race it denies the individual an equal opportunity in the community." These, however, were representative of only a small minority of the responses.

Sixty-one percent of the adults, 50% of the 17-year-olds and 31% of the 13-year-olds said that ability was the most important factor to be considered in hiring. "Race shouldn't be a factor in hiring someone for a job as long as he is qualified," claimed an adult. "A person should be hired for any job solely on the basis of qualification and for ability," agreed another. "Color should not make a difference in a person's ability to do a job," wrote a 17-year-old. "It's the ability that counts, nothing more." "Would you care to have a black genius or a retarded white?" asked a 13-year-old. This stress on ability is perhaps

indicative of an acceptance of the underlying assumptions behind the American dream—that because in America all are born equal, all have the opportunity to improve themselves and their lot. It is those who develop their abilities who are finally rewarded for their perserverance.

Others stressed the importance of quality and human dignity. "All men are created equal" and "Equal opportunities are a must," replied the 13-year-olds. "Everyone should be given an equal chance regardless of race, color or creed," wrote a 17-year-old. Other respondents his age added that "we are all the same inside" and "God created all men equal. All men need a job." Another reason is that "even though they're a different color on the outside they're all made of the same stuff." Twenty-two percent of the 13-year-olds and 20% of the 17-year-olds replied in this category. Twelve percent of the young adults cited reasons of equality and dignity.

Approximately 10% of the respondents gave other acceptable responses. Thirteen-year-olds wrote: "One race can do as good as the other." "All races need a job." Seventeen-year-olds replied: "Because it would be hard for certain races to get jobs and unemployment would be an even greater problem than it is now." "Yes, there may be jobs where a person of a certain color is needed, such as in social work. It need only be a small factor but it is a factor. A white could not do a good job in a black section." "Race should definitely be a factor in hiring employees," argued another 17 year-old. "Blacks have been victimized in our society since 1620, and its about time they got a fair shake. If ratios are needed to end racism in our society, so be it." Adults suggested that "working together will help to reach better understanding" and "everyone have the right to earn a living." Only a small number of respondents voiced racist sentiments.

Suprisingly, a few of the respondents interpreted the word "race" to mean contest, as in a foot race. "Racing should not be a job," said a 13-year-old, "it should be just for sports." One thought speed important. "So you can get the work done faster." Another cautioned against undue haste: "Because you don't have to hire someone just because their fast in some jobs you have to be slow and careful." "They can have a race," said another 13-year-old, "but not until after they work a while." A 17-year-old explained, "If a person has better references or has better qualifications she should not have to race for the job that he would like to get." An adult wrote, "Unless its piece work and some people are slower than other. Neatness should count."

As amusing as some of these answers are, they do not erase the seriousness of the question or of most of the answers given. One 13-year-old wrote, "I am Black." One can sense in these few words an understanding of the question and an awareness that racial discrimination continues.

Open Housing (RAB04)

Seventeen-year-olds and young adults were asked:

A. *Do you think the people who live in a neighborhood should be allowed to decide who can and cannot live in their neighborhood?*
B. *Please explain any answer you selected.*

A higher percentage of 17-year-olds thought people should be able to live where they choose (Table 19).

Seventeen-year-olds were also more capable of supporting their decisions with acceptable reasons (Table 20).

A majority of the acceptable responses cited by both age groups referred to the "right or privilege of the individual to live where he chooses." Other answers were widely distributed throughout a number of categories (Table 21).

TABLE 19
Percent of Respondents Selecting Each Choice, Exercise RAB04 Part A, Open Housing

Choices	Age 17	Adult
Yes	7%	16%
No	87	70
Undecided	6	15
No response	0	0

TABLE 20
Percent of Respondents Giving Acceptable Reasons For or Against Open Housing, Exercise RAB04 Part B

Reasons	Age 17	Adult
Acceptable	81%	65%
Unacceptable	17	33
No response	2	2

TABLE 21
Percent of Respondents Giving Various Reasons For or Against Open Housing, Exercise RAB04 Part B

Reasons	Age 17	Adult
Individuals have the right to live where they choose	63%	51%
Discrimination is wrong; bad effects of discrimination	10	9
Neighbors should not be allowed to choose	1	1
Other acceptable responses	6	5
Reason mentioning fear of depreciation of property (takes precedence over other negative categories)	2	6
Special conditions—neighbors should have some say about race, religion or ethnic group	1	1
Special conditions—neighbors should have some say in special cases	1	1
Reason making reference to zoning ordinances or ability to pay (does not mention first category)	1	1
Vague, nonsensical, other unacceptable responses	12	21
I don't know	1	2
No response	2	2

Sixty-three percent of the 17-year-olds and 51% of the adults gave reasons acknowledging the "right or privilege of the individual to live where he chooses." One student wrote that "a person should have the right to choose any place he wished to live and the people of the neighborhood should respect his decision. After all this is a free country." Another 17-year-old replied, "No, because I think a person should or can live where they please" and then added, "It is very hard nowadays to find good homes or places to live so I think a good small neighborhood is fine." "This is supposed to be a free country!" was the brief explanation of another. A few qualified their answers with statements about the cost: "I feel we should have the right to live in any area we want, provided we are able to buy the home and pay for it fully. There is no reason a person who is financially able to pay for a place shouldn't have the right to by it." Even more adults than 17-year-olds cited the cost qualification. "A person should have the right to live anywhere he can afford to live" was typical of these answers. Other adult responses included: "If people are supposed to have equal rights within the USA this should apply in all areas." "Just because someone lives in a certain neighborhood, doesn't give them the right to decide who else can live there." One simply stated, "Equal rights bill."

Discrimination and its harmful effects were mentioned by 10% of the 17-year-olds and 9% of the adults. "There is overpopulation now," wrote a 17-year-old. "Not enough places for people to live. It isn't fair to discriminate, because of race creed or color." Another youth answered at length: "Many people are too prejudiced against a certain nationality or family (or a type of work—police) before even knowing anyone of that kind. Often, the people are not what their nationalities are made up to be." The adults wrote: "I don't believe in segregation of any form." "If persons were allowed to decide, it would create

neighbors that were segregated according to race, creed etc., & allow no interaction of people or ideas." One adult concluded that "such a situation carried to the extreme can & often does lead to a desire to retain homogeneity in the neighborhood, resulting in discrimination & exclusivity." Two interesting replies from among the other acceptable responses given by 17-year-olds were: "This is God's land; it was put here for all men" and this lengthy answer with an unusual conclusion, "People will all to often judge others by their skin color, religion, ethnic backgrounds or other unimportant qualities. According to the U.S. constitution people have the right to live any where they want to. Who knows maybe if we won't let others into our neighborhood God won't let us into his!!"

Six percent of the adults and 2% of the 17-year-olds mentioned their fear of depreciation of property—the most frequently cited unacceptable response. A small percentage of respondents at both ages thought neighbors should have some say about race. A 17-year-old explained, "If it is an all white neighborhood or all black neighborhood they should be able to pick who can or cannot live there, their would only be conflict between mixed races anyhow." Some adults shared his concern: "We should be able to pick because we may not want Negroes in our community." "Because there would be too much trouble if blacks and whites live together." A few in each age group mentioned special cases. One 17-year-old was worried that "it may be a person who sells dope and sell the neighbors children some." Another thought that in a commune "the people of the commune should decide who they would like to live with." An adult replied that "people should be allowed to decide if public housing will be built in their neighborhood." Another said, "I wouldn't want someone loud or sloppy. I wouldn't want a lot of dogs or cats running around loose." A small number of respondents made references to zoning ordinances or the ability to pay. These answers were considered unacceptable as they did not include a statement of the individual's right to live where he chooses.

Most of the answers scored as vague, nonsensical or otherwise unacceptable expressed the respondent's desire to control his social environment. One 17-year-old desired "to keep unwanted people out of their neighborhood who might be a bad influence on the children in that neighborhood." An undecided youth added that "if there is a certain family who may steal a lot from the neighborhood I don't think he ought to be able to live there." Another undecided 17-year-old said, "I would have to know a few more facts for example, what kind of people they would be and how or if they would affect the nighborhood as a whole." The adults replied: "People *should* have the right to decide the makeup of a particular neighborhood but not to the degree that a person's race or religion should be a determining factor. We all would like our children to grow up in a 'safe' neighborhood but with some exposure to all people." Another adult who knew his own tastes said, "There are an lots of undesirable people that I wouldn't like to live by me." He may have been more blunt in his reply than most but he also expressed the attitude of many. The unacceptable responses offered a number of reasons—all of which added up to the fact that many Americans, though certainly not a majority, were unwilling to grant equal rights to all of their fellow citizens.

CHAPTER 2

KNOWLEDGE OF THE ROLE AND FUNCTION OF GOVERNMENT

Under the federal system of government, the responsibilities of governing are divided among or shared by federal, state and local units. The federal system delegates certain powers to the central government and reserves the rest to the states. The states, in turn, allow local units of government, such as counties, cities and towns, to have jurisdiction in certain matters. At times these powers are exercised concurrently by the federal government and the states or by the state and local governments. As a measure of their understanding of the responsibilities of local governmental agencies, one exercise, *The Duties of the Health Department (RKP01)*, was administered to 9-year-olds. Two exercises, *Head of Town Government (RKP03)* and *Who Is Responsible for a Fair Trial? (RKP02)*, provide data on how much 9-year-olds know about the roles of various governmental figures. *Government Responsibility/Federal, State, Local (RKP08A-D)* and *(UKP07A-D)* provides us with information on whether or not young Americans understand the division of governmental responsibilities among local, state and federal institutions.

To further provide a system of checks and balances which guards against the unwarranted use of power, the Constitution divides the American federal government into three distinct branches—the legislative, executive and judicial. Each branch is delegated a major responsibility.

National Assessment measured what young Americans know about the system of checks and balances in four exercises. Three exercises deal broadly with the Supreme Court, *Power to Declare Act of Congress Unconstitutional (RKP13)*, and two which are unreleased *(UKP15)* and *(UKP14)*. One deals with *International Relations (UKP12)*. Thirteen-year-olds, 17-year-olds and young adults were further asked to identify some major departments in the executive branch of government in two unreleased exercises related to *Foreign Affairs (UKP06)* and a *Cabinet Position (UKP05)*.

The Duties of the Health Department (RKP01)

Nine-year-olds were asked:

Below are listed four of the many jobs that are done in a city. Which one of the jobs is done by the health department?

The four choices were (1) selling food, (2) directing traffic, (3) putting out fires and (4) inspecting restaurants. About one third of the students knew the correct answer (Table 22).

TABLE 22

Percent of 9-Year-Olds Selecting Each Choice, Exercise RKP01, The Duties of the Health Department

Choices	Age 9
Selling food	26%
Directing traffic	6
Putting out fires	20
*Inspecting restaurants	36
I don't know	12
No response	0

**Correct response*

Head of Town Government (RKP03)

Nine-year-olds were given this exercise:

The head of government in the United States is the President. Which one of the following is usually the head of government in a town?

The four choices were (1) mayor, (2) the governor, (3) the chief of police and (4) the school principal. Perhaps the fact that the words governor and government are derivations of the same word led many to select the second choice. Regardless, a large number of respondents did not know the chief function of a mayor (Table 23).

TABLE 23
Percent of 9-Year-Olds Selecting Each Choice, Exercise RKP03, Head of Town Government

Choices	Age 9
*The mayor	58%
The governor	32
The chief of police	5
The school principal	2
I don't know	3
No response	1

**Correct response*

Who Is Responsible for a Fair Trial? (RKP02)

Nine-year-olds also were asked to respond to the following:

> *In a court, which one of the following has the job of making sure that the trial is fair and run according to the rules?*

The four choices were (1) the judge, (2) the lawyer, (3) the jury and (4) the person on trial. Nearly three fourths of the age 9 group responded correctly (Table 24).

TABLE 24
Percent of 9-Year-Olds Selecting Each Choice, Exercise RKP02, Who Is Responsible for a Fair Trial?

Choices	Age 9
*The judge	74%
The lawyer	9
The jury	10
The person on trial	3
I don't know	4
No response	0

**Correct response*

Government Responsibility/Federal, State, Local (RKP08A-D) and (UKP07A-D)

Do Americans understand the division of governmental responsibilities among local, state and federal institutions? The next two exercises try to provide an answer.

Thirteen-year-olds, 17-year-olds and young adults responded to the following in Exercise RKP08.

> *Consider each of the following laws and decide which level of government (federal, state or local) would be MOST likely to pass it. Fill in the oval beside "Federal government" if the federal government would pass it, the oval beside "State government" if a state government would pass it, or the oval beside "Local government" if a local government would pass it. If you do not know the answer, fill in the oval beside "I don't know."*

The questions and percentages for all age groups are listed:

A. *Which one of the following would MOST likely pass an act to set up a central university with branches in several cities?*

TABLE 25
Percent of Respondents Selecting Each Choice, Exercise RKP08A, Government Responsibility/Federal, State, Local

Choices	Age 13	Age 17	Adult
Federal Government	15%	11%	13%
*State government	71	84	79
Local government	11	5	4
I don't know	3	1	5

**Correct response*

B. *Which one of the following would MOST likely pass an act to raise the rates for sending letters through the mail?*

TABLE 26
Percent of Respondents Selecting Each Choice, Exercise RKP08B, Government Responsibility/Federal, State, Local

Choices	Age 13	Age 17	Adult
*Federal government	72%	90%	95%
State government	13	5	3
Local government	13	5	1
I don't know	3	1	1

**Correct response*

C. *Which one of the following would MOST likely pass an act to lower taxes on goods coming into the country?*

TABLE 27
Percent of Respondents Selecting Each Choice, Exercise RKP08C, Government Responsibility/Federal, State, Local

Choices	Age 13	Age 17	Adult
*Federal government	73%	89%	92%
State government	17	8	5
Local government	8	2	1
I don't know	1	1	2

**Correct response*

D. *Which one of the following would MOST likely pass an act to increase garbage collection services?*

TABLE 28
Percent of Respondents Selecting Each Choice, Exercise RKP08D, Government Responsibility/Federal, State, Local

Choices	Age 13	Age 17	Adult
Federal government	5%	2%	1%
State government	15	6	5
*Local government	77	92	92
I don't know	3	1	2

**Correct response*

Once again 17-year-olds scored nearly as high as young adults while 13-year-olds scored considerably lower (Table 29).

TABLE 29
Percent of Respondents Answering Correctly on Four Parts of Exercise RKP08A-D, Government Responsibility/Federal, State, Local

Number of Correct Choices Out of Four	Age 13	Age 17	Adult
One	96%	99%	99%
Two	85	96	96
Three	67	88	90
Exactly four	45	72	74

Government Responsibility/Federal, State, Local (UKP07A-D)

An unreleased four-part exercise measured the respondents' understanding of the responsibilities of federal, state and local governments; 17-year-olds scored nearly as high as young adults, while 13-year-olds lagged behind (Table 30).

TABLE 30
Percent of Respondents Answering Correctly on Four Parts of Exercise UKP07A-D, Government Responsibility/Federal, State, Local

Number of Correct Choices Out of Four	Age 13	Age 17	Adult
One	96%	99%	99%
Two	83	95	96
Three	57	84	88
Exactly four	21	51	62

Power to Declare Act of Congress Unconstitutional (RKP13)

Thirteen-year-olds, 17-year-olds and young adults were asked:

Which one of the following has the power to declare an act of Congress unconstitutional?

The four choices were (1) the Congress, (2) the President, (3) the United States Supreme Court and (4) the United States Department of Justice. In this exercise a higher percentage of 17-year-olds than young adults knew the correct answer. The results indicate that more than one third of all the adults in America do not know that the United States Supreme Court has the power to declare an act of Congress unconstitutional (Table 31).

TABLE 31
Percent of Respondents Selecting Each Choice, Exercise RKP13, Power to Declare Act of Congress Unconstitutional

Choices	Age 13	Age 17	Adult
The Congress	8%	5%	4%
The President	24	11	15
*The United States Supreme Court	35	71	62
The United States Department of Justice	19	8	6
I don't know	14	5	12

**Correct response*

Supreme Court Decision Making (UKP14)

In an unreleased exercise dealing with the Supreme Court, only 9% of the 17-year-olds demonstrated knowledge of the Court's decision making process.

Supreme Court (UKP15)

In an unreleased exercise dealing with knowledge of the Supreme Court, 66% of the adults responded correctly while only 56% of the 17-year-olds and 30% of the 13-year-olds were able to do so.

International Relations (UKP12)

In an unreleased exercise dealing with factors involved in international relations, 17-year-olds showed somewhat greater knowledge than adults. Forty-nine percent of the 17-year-olds gave the correct response; 46% of the young adults and 26% of the 13-year-olds knew the right answer.

Foreign Affairs (UKP06)

In an unreleased exercise, 64% of the adults showed that they understood something about how certain foreign affairs decisions are made while only 38% of the 17-year-olds and 27% of the 13-year-olds were able to do so.

Cabinet Position (UKP05)

In an unreleased exercise concerning the President's Cabinet, about two thirds of the age 17 and young adult groups responded correctly. The exact percentages of correct answers for each group were 17-year-olds, 67%; young adults, 66%; and 13-year-olds, 39%.

CHAPTER 3

KNOWLEDGE OF AND ATTITUDES TOWARD CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS

The Constitution specifies the individual rights or immunities which governments are forbidden to violate. These rights include the freedoms of religion, speech and press, petition, peaceable assembly, the right to a speedy and public trial, freedom from discrimination in voting and other guarantees. These rights are guaranteed in the Constitution, but it is only through their acceptance by all members of a self-governing society and by upholding them equally for all persons that democracy is able to preserve and extend human freedoms. While acceptance of these rights is difficult to measure accurately, we can measure knowledge. From this data we may get some indicators about how well young Americans understand the rights guaranteed by the Constitution. National Assessment looked into this issue in the following two exercises: *Look for Civil Rights/Constitution (RKP09)* and *Supreme Court/Prayer in School Decision (RKP11).*

It is one thing to test directly a person's knowledge of his constitutional rights and another to ask a question indirectly which may reveal his personal attitudes toward those rights. One may answer yes when asked, "Is freedom of speech guaranteed in the Bill of Rights and do you believe in freedom of speech?" But to follow this with a question such as, "Should anyone be allowed to publicly criticize the use of United States troops in military action abroad?" may elicit a negative reply. Probably the second reply is more revealing of a person's attitudes toward freedom of speech. The second question was the type asked in the remaining nine exercises in this chapter. The answers offer no measurement of knowledge, but they do indicate how Americans view the freedoms of speech and press, religion, petition , peaceable assembly and the freedom of inquiry.

Look for Civil Rights/Constitution (RKP09)

Thirteen-year-olds, 17-year-olds and young adults were asked:

If a citizen of the United States wants to find a statement of his civil rights, in which one of the following should he look?

The four choices were (1) in the Bible, (2) in the Constitution, (3) in the Articles of Confederation and (4) in the Declaration of Independence. Seventeen-year-olds most frequently recognized the correct source as the Constitution and were followed by young adults and 13-year-olds (Table 32).

TABLE 32
Percent of Respondents Selecting Each Choice, Exercise RKP09, Look for Civil Rights/ Constitution

Choices	Age 13	Age 17	Adult
In the Bible	1%	0%	1%
*In the Constitution	63	84	78
In the Articles of Confederation	11	6	4
In the Declaration of Independence	20	8	14
I don't know	5	2	4
No response	0	0	0

**Correct response*

Supreme Court/Prayer in School Decision (RKP11)

Seventeen-year-olds and young adults were told:

The Supreme Court ruled that it is unconstitutional to require prayer and formal religious instruction in public schools.

Which one of the following was the basis for its decision?

The four choices were (1) the requirements violated the right to freedom of speech, (2) there was strong pressure put on the Supreme Court by certain religious minorities, (3) religious exercises violated the principles of the separation of church and state and (4) every moment of the valuable school time was needed to prepare students to earn a living. About half of the respondents in each age group understood the constitutional principle involved in the Court's decision. A large minority thought the Court had reached its decision because of strong pressure from certain religious minorities (Table 33).

TABLE 33
Percent of Respondents Selecting Each Choice, Exercise RKP11, Supreme Court/Prayer in School Decision

Choices	Age 17	Adult
The requirements violated the right to freedom of speech	10%	15%
There was strong pressure put on the Supreme Court by certain religious minorities	25	19
*Religious exercises violated the principles of the separation of church and state	49	52
Every moment of the valuable school time was needed to prepare students to earn a living	5	3
I don't know	11	11
No response	0	0

**Correct response*

Should Young Citizens Write to Public Officials? (RAR02)

Thirteen-year-olds, 17-year-olds and young adults were asked:

A. *Should citizens who are younger than the legal voting age have the right to write letters to elected government officials or to publicly express their views on political issues?*
B. *Please explain any answer you selected.*

A majority in each age group replied affirmatively. Seventeen-year-olds were most supportive of the principle of free speech (Table 34).

The 17-year-olds were also more capable of offering an acceptable reason to support their answer in part A (Table 35).

TABLE 34
Percent of Respondents Selecting Each Choice, Exercise RAR02 Part A, Should Young Citizens Write to Public Officials?

Choices	Age 13	Age 17	Adult
Yes	72%	87%	79%
No	16	6	11
Undecided	12	6	10
No response	1	0	0

TABLE 35
Percent of Respondents Giving Acceptable Reasons Why Young Citizens Should Write to Public Officials, Exercise RAR02 Part B

Reasons	Age 13	Age 17	Adult
Acceptable	58%	80%	73%
Unacceptable	37	18	24
No response	5	2	3

Mention of a citizen's right to free speech was the most frequent response among all ages. The wording of the question may have prompted such answers. The phrasing lent itself to "should" responses—e.g., "Every American citizen should have freedom of speech." Although this kind of response cites freedom of speech, it does not necessarily indicate that the subject was aware of the constitutional right of freedom of speech. Twenty-seven percent of the 13-year-olds' responses were in this category. Rather, these younger students argued that "you are a member of nation and should be able to express your feelings" and "this is a free country and you have the right to speak and to do what is right." One observed that "everyone should have the right to do that, no matter if they are 9 or 90 unless they are too young to write."

Thirty-six percent of the 17-year-olds cited reasons of free speech and many indicated that they were aware that a constitutional right was at issue. "Everyone no matter what age has a right to his or her opinion. The Constitution states that we have the right to freedom of speech and press," noted one student. Another said that "any citizen of the United States should (and does) have the right to express his views because he is a citizen of the United States." Seventeen-year-olds were especially sensitive to the question of age. "They are citizens and should have the right to voice their opinions no matter what age," wrote one. Another said that "every citizen has a right to speak and express what he feels is right, it is part of the Constitution. Age should not play any part in a citizen's rights." One 17-year-old added this critical note: "I feel that everyone should be able to express their opinions whether through letters or verbally. People of legal voting age, seem to hardly ever use this priviledge, so why not let under age children express their views." Adults also were more aware than 13-year-olds of the constitutional right at stake. "Any one in the country is guaranteed under the constitution the right of freedom of speech," answered one adult. "Freedom of speech whether you are 16 or 26 years of age" was the brief response of another. Thirty-two percent of the young adults gave responses in this category.

The remaining answers were distributed among a number of reasons (Table 36). More 13-year-olds thought this a "way of participating in government when you can't vote" than

TABLE 36
Percent of Respondents Giving Various Reasons For and Against Writing Officials or Publicly Expressing One's Views, Exercise RAR02 Part B

Reasons	Age 13	Age 17	Adult
Right as a citizen–free speech	27%	36%	32%
To inform others; their ideas are good	8	11	12
Future benefits, future leaders	5	10	14
Their lives are affected by political decisions	5	12	5
Way of participating in government when you can't vote	6	3	0
To help elected officials	3	3	2
Young people should participate in the government	2	2	1
Other acceptable responses	3	4	6
Not experienced enough or mature enough to express their views	7	4	5
No one will pay attention to their views. Will have no effect	1	1	1
Conditional: in some cases they should be able to express their views	2	3	2
They don't have the right	3	1	4
Vague, nonsensical, other unacceptable responses	17	8	9
I don't know	6	2	4
No response	5	2	3

respondents in the other two groups. Adults seldom cited this reason. Perhaps the 17-year-olds envisioned their approaching enfranchisement, for in comparison with the 13-year-olds, only half of the 17-year-olds cited this reason. Seventeen-year-olds were most likely among the three age groups to state that their lives were affected by political decisions.

The percentages indicate that about a third of the respondents cited free speech or the right of a citizen as their defense for citizens younger than the legal voting age having the right to write letters to elected officials or to publicly express their views on political issues. But as in previous exercises, one cannot be certain that the respondents are knowledgeable of a specific constitutional right. Some refer directly to the Constitution; many more seem to assume that freedom of speech is a universal right proclaimed and accepted everywhere.

Public Criticism of U.S. Troops Abroad (RAR05)

Seventeen-year-olds and young adults were asked to respond to this exercise:

A. Indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statement:

Anyone who criticizes the use of United States troops in military action abroad should be prohibited from expressing his views publicly.

B. Please explain your position.

Ninety percent of the 17-year-olds and 91% of the adults disagreed with the statement. Four out of five people at each age level gave acceptable explanations of their positions.

Nearly three fourths of the respondents—71% in each age group—cited such reasons as "freedom of speech; constitutional rights; should be able to express views"—most of which indicated that the respondents understood the basic constitutional right at issue. "The first amendment to the U.S. Constitution guarantees the right of freedom of speech," said one 17-year-old. An adult commented that "everyone in this country has a right to express his views about anything. That's one of the many great rights & privileges the American people enjoy." Another adult added, "A citizen of the U.S. is guaranteed the right to hold and express his own opinion, even if it is contrary to the official government position. This is one of the rights expressly stated in the Bill of Rights."

TABLE 37
Percent of Respondents Giving Various Reasons for Defending or Refusing to Support Public Criticism of American Military Action Abroad, Exercise RAR05 Part B

Reasons	Age 17	Adult
Freedom of speech; constitutional rights; should be able to express views	71%	71%
Legitimate conditional	4	5
Advantages of speaking views	3	3
Duty to speak view; everyone should have a voice in the government	2	1
Other acceptable responses	1	2
Conditional	2	2
"Agree": cite patriotic statements	4	2
"Disagree": cite statements that our government's military policy should be criticized	1	1
Vague, nonsensical, other unacceptable responses	8	8
I don't know	2	2
No response	2	3

Some of the respondents replied to the statement with conditional explanations. "The United States supposedly advocates free speech so the citizens should have that right. People should be able to say what they think unless they get violent or try to start violence," said a 17-year-old. He concluded optimistically, "A person can express his opinion in a way which will be nice and not get anybody mad." His concern was shared by a young adult. "It is one of our best constitutional rights to voice opinions. However, this adult noted, "Radical demonstrations also deprive other peoples rights. Therefore expressing publicly ones views should not be violent or taking someones elses rights away." One 17-year-old interpreted freedom of speech as meaning "anyone can express their views publicly as long as it is not in profane language. I believe the same," he added.

The reasons and percentages appear in Table 37. What is striking is the near total agreement between 17-year-olds and young adults in this exercise.

Religious Freedom for Elected Officials (RAR07)

Thirteen-year-olds, 17-year-olds and young adults were asked:

Should a person who does not believe in God be allowed to hold a public office?

About three fifths of the respondents answered affirmatively. The adults scored lowest as nearly half were unwilling or undecided about allowing an atheist to serve in public office (Table 38).

TABLE 38
Percent of Respondents Selecting Each Choice, Exercise RAR07, Religious Freedom for Elected Officials

Choices	Age 13	Age 17	Adult
Yes	59%	63%	56%
No	20	18	25
Undecided	20	20	19
No response	0	0	0

Freedom to Picket Rock Festival and Police Station (RAR12A-B)

Seventeen-year-olds and young adults were given the following situations regarding the right to picket:

A. *Do you think people should be allowed to picket the holding of a rock festival as a protest against it?*
B. *Please give a reason for your answer.*
C. *Do you think people should be allowed to picket a police station to protest reported police brutality?*
D. *Please give a reason for your answer.*

Tables 39 and 40 reveal that the percentages of both 17-year-olds and adults who supported the right to picket in either instance were relatively low—about one half at each age.

TABLE 39
Percent of Respondents Selecting Each Choice, Exercise RAR12A Part A, Freedom to Picket Rock Festival

Choices	Age 17	Adult
Yes	53%	63%
No	41	31
Undecided	6	5
No response	1	1

TABLE 40
Percent of Respondents Selecting Each Choice, Exercise RAR12B Part C, Freedom to Picket Police Station

Choices	Age 17	Adult
Yes	52%	52%
No	41	42
Undecided	7	5
No response	1	1

Only 56% of the adults and 42% of the 17-year-olds gave acceptable reasons for their response to part A (Table 41), and 44% of the adults and 40% of the 17-year-olds gave acceptable reasons for their response to part C (Table 42).

TABLE 41
Percent of Respondents Giving Various Reasons for Allowing or Forbidding People to Picket a Rock Festival, Exercise RAR12A Part B

Reasons	Age 17	Adult
Recognizes constitutional freedom or right to picket	17%	24%
Should be allowed—reference to fairness	7	7
Conditional: concern for public safety (must give yes or positive undecided to A)	8	14
Conditional: legal permission (must give yes or positive undecided to A)	1	1
Yes—indicates concern about rock festival problems	6	6
Other acceptable	4	5
Conditional	5	3
Statements which would not permit picketing because they support or see nothing wrong with rock festivals	13	5
Indication that picketing shows disrespect for the law, or is not right	1	1
People do not have a right to picket, because other people have a right to have a rock festival	5	5
Alternate procedure	4	3
Vague, nonsensical, other unacceptable responses	25	23
I don't know	2	2
No response	3	2

TABLE 42
Percent of Respondents Giving Various Reasons for Allowing or Forbidding People to Picket a Police Station, Exercise RAR12B Part D

Reasons	Age 17	Adult
Recognizes constitutional freedom or right to picket	9%	15%
Should be allowed—reference to fairness	2	1
Conditional: concern for public safety (must give yes or positive undecided to A)	5	11
Conditional: legal permission (must give yes or positive undecided to A)	0	0
Yes—shows concern about the problem of brutality	14	8
Other acceptable	11	9
Conditional	10	9
Statements which would not permit picketing because they support police	16	12
Indication that picketing shows disrespect for the law, or that picketing is not right	2	2
Alternate procedure	12	16
Vague, nonsensical, other unacceptable responses	16	15
I don't know	1	1
No response	3	1

Recognizing that both situations have been given to measure attitudes toward the same right to picket, one may be surprised by the variation in answers when the responses to the two questions are compared. There were some among both age groups who cited their constitutional right to picket. "Bill of rights—freedom of speech," wrote a 17-year-old. "I believe that orderly picketing can do no harm." Another youth commented, "They have a right to picket just as parents do." Adults also noted that "picketing is a form of freedom of speech." "People have a right to hold a festival in a public place. People also have a right to protest it." But in both age groups the percentages notably decline when the picketing is directed against the police instead of the rock festival. Seven percent of each age group said it was fair to allow picketing of the rock festival, but the percentages dropped sharply when considering the fairness of picketing a police station (Table 43).

TABLE 43

Percent of Respondents Giving Selected Reasons for Allowing or Forbidding People to Picket a Rock Festival or a Police Station, Exercise RAR12A,B

Reasons	Age 17		Adult	
	Rock Festival	Police Station	Rock Festival	Police Station
Recognizes constitutional freedom or right to picket	17%	9%	24%	15%
Should be allowed—reference to fairness	7	2	7	1
Conditional: concern for public safety	8	5	14	11
Conditional: legal permission	1	0	1	0
Yes—indicates concern about rock festival problems	6	–	6	–
Yes, shows concern about the problem of brutality	–	14	–	8
Would not permit picketing: supports police or sees nothing wrong with rock festivals	13	16	5	12
Would choose alternate procedure	4	12	3	16

Six percent of the 17-year-olds and young adults supported the right to picket in the first situation and also indicated their concern about problems at rock festivals. Seventeen-year-olds were alarmed "because of the things that go on that shouldn't at a rock festival" and "because they would make a mess of the grounds." Adults were especially worried about the availability of drugs: "Well! from what I've seen most rock festivals seem to tear up the country side or where they hold it. If they want to stop the use of illegal drugs & pot they ought to be able to protest against it." Another adult states, "A lot of rock festivals are noted for having dope & they disturb the peace."

More 17-year-olds (14%) than young adults (8%) supported picketing the police station and expressed their concern over brutality. Seventeen-year-olds commented: "Because sometimes the cops get out of hand and let the power go to their heads." "Maybe it was a friend that got beat up for no reason at all." "If the truth comes out under pressure, it would either clear up the scandal or cause a constructive change on the part of the police." Another youth stated that police brutality was "just not right and something must be done about it." Fewer adults expressed the same concern. One thought that picketing might "keep the police from thinking they can do as they please because they carry guns and the name of the Law on them."

Not everyone supported the right to picket. Forty-one percent of the 17-year-olds and 31% of the adults did not think people should be allowed to picket a rock festival. Thirteen percent of the age 17 group, but only 5% of the adults, defended their opinions by stating that they saw nothing wrong with rock festivals. "Not a rock festival," argued one youth. "It's an enjoyment for some people; no one pickets a golf course and that may be their enjoyment they paid to see it. They should be able to enjoy it." Another 17-year-old felt

that "it's just people enjoying music and doing their own thing, really. They're not bothering anyone if it's out in the country." The adults stated "if people want to go out & have a rock festival. I think they should be allowed to" or more strongly, "I feel it is going against constitutional rights of persons holding rock festival. You have the right to attend or not attend, but just because you don't agree with the rock festival doesn't give you the right to picket it."

There was an even higher percentage of respondents who would not permit picketing because they supported the police. Sixteen percent of the 17-year-olds said that the police were just doing their job. "Police have to protect the public in any way they can," claimed one youth, and another rationalized, "The police department is put there to protect the people and their valuables, and if a policeman is charged with brutality he must have a good reason for having done it." One defended the police by arguing, "The police are there to protect you. They shouldn't be insulted. Many people say things against the police, but when they need them they always ask for them." Twelve percent of the adults gave similar responses: "The police are our protection. The ones hollering police brutality are usually trying to get people against the enforcement—the law enforcement." "The policemen are our city govt. Their job is hard & we have to support them if there is to be law & order. No."

In both situations a small percentage of 17-year-olds said they would allow picketing and suggested alternate procedures for resolving the dilemma. Some wanted to "talk to the mayor of the city or other city managers" about the rock festival. Others said, "I don't think people should go against something so many people like. They should compromise in a decent way" or rather than picket, "They ought to take it to the law and get it worked out that way, and not take the law into their own hands." Regarding the matter of police brutality, the 17-year-olds wanted it "decided in court" or suggested that "they should go to the police's superiors." One student thought that "to protest it is a violent way in a sense, in that they could get better results if they were to find other means to get their point across." Adults voiced similar opinions. "I'm just against people protesting out in public," explained one adult. "I think there's a way to do it without protesting." The adults wanted the matter of police brutality resolved "at city council meetins" or "taken to court & proved." They thought "there should be different channels to go thru, rather than creating disturbances with public officials." Signing petitions and writing letters were suggested means.

Combining the results for both picketing questions revealed inconsistencies in the attitudes many Americans have toward their constitutional rights (Table 44). Although 69% of the 17-year-olds felt people should be allowed to picket either a rock festival or a police station, or both, only 35% said people should be allowed to picket both. Almost as many 17-year-olds (30%) felt people should *not* be allowed to picket either. Among young adults, 73% said people should be allowed to picket either one or the other, but only 42% felt people should be allowed to picket both. One fourth of the young adults did *not* feel people should be allowed to picket either rock festivals or the police. Only 6% of the 17-year-olds and 11% of the adults felt a person should be allowed to picket and expressly recognized picketing as a means of expressing a constitutional right in both cases.

TABLE 44
Percent of Respondents For and Against Picketing Either a Rock Festival or a Police Station or Both, Exercise RAR12A,B

Responses to Rock Festival and Police Station Situations	Age 17	Adult
Should be allowed to picket either one or the other, or both	69%	73%
Should be allowed to picket both	35	42
Should not be allowed to picket either	30	26
Should be allowed to picket both and recognizes constitutional right in both cases	6	11

The dramatic shifts in percentages when categories are compared or when the results of the two questions are combined indicate a lack of consistency in the view respondents have of the right to picket. Is the basis for the inconsistency a lack of constitutional knowledge or does what one learns in theory rarely become the determining factor in judgmental decision making? Maybe we all tend to adjust our social perceptions to fit our needs and wishes. What is clear in this exercise is that the percentages of both 17-year-olds and young adults recognizing the constitutional issue involved were low.

Newspaper's Right to Criticize Public Officials (RAR08)

Ages 13, 17 and young adult were asked:

A. Should a newspaper or magazine be allowed to publish something that criticizes an elected government official?
B. Please give a reason for any answer you selected.

As Table 45 indicates, the older respondents were most supportive of freedom of the press, but even one fifth of the adults were opposed or undecided.

TABLE 45
Percent of Respondents Selecting Each Choice, Exercise RAR08 Part A, Newspaper's Right to Criticize Public Officials

Choices	Age 13	Age 17	Adult
Yes	49%	73%	81%
No	38	16	8
Undecided	13	11	11
No response	0	0	0

Table 46 reveals that adults were able to offer acceptable reasons for their answers more often than 13-year-olds or 17-year-olds.

TABLE 46
Percent of Respondents Giving Various Reasons Why News Media Can or Cannot Publish Criticism of Elected Government Officials, Exercise RAR08 Part B

Reasons	Age 13	Age 17	Adult
Freedom of the press; constitutional rights	18%	22%	30%
Need to be informed and/or resulting citizen actions	13	25	21
Right to say what they feel	5	7	5
Help the official; help the country	2	4	6
Conditional: if it is true	3	7	6
Conditional with respect to libel (limits freedom of press)	0	1	1
Other acceptable	1	2	4
It isn't fair; may hurt the official	13	6	2
May publish statements that are not true	3	2	1
Paper should not criticize—no reason given	4	1	1
Would destroy people's confidence in government; start riots	2	1	0
Conditional: other conditions	2	6	9
Vague, nonsensical, other unacceptable responses	22	12	8
I don't know	7	3	3
No response	5	2	3

Many respondents supported the right of the press to criticize government officials by citing the constitutional rights of freedom of speech and/or press. Eighteen percent of the 13-year-olds, 22% of the 17-year-olds and 30% of the adults gave reasons of this nature. Most of the 13-year-olds' responses were short and to the point: "The Constitution states that there is freedom of the press" or "A person has freedom of speech in the United

States." One student explained, "I don't really know because it could incriminate him and he could probably sue, but they say there's freedom of the press." What reasons did 17-year-olds offer? "Because in the Bill of Rights we are granted freedom of speech and press and everyone has a right to state his opinion even if it criticizes an elected official," reasoned one youth. Another stated, "The Bill of Right, the first ten amendments to the Constitution guarantee freedom of the press to all American citizens." Adults often elaborated at greater length: "Freedom of the press is and should be a jealously guarded freedom. If we take away the right of the press to criticize the government, we have taken a dangerous step toward government censorship & an ensuing dictatorial form of government." Another adult said, "The constitution guarantees us the freedom of speech and press but it should be done more discreetly than it usually is."

The skepticism of older respondents was reflected in the reason "need to be informed and/or resulting citizen actions." Twenty-five percent of the 17-year-olds gave such answers as: "The people should be told about a government official that might steal money or be a hippocrit" and "It should be so all the people will know whats going on and what the person is really like." One simply asked, "Who will know about the government officials if they don't publish it?" One fifth of the young adults offered similar responses. "Newspapers and magazines are two sources where citizens, especially those in a democracy and are decisionmakers, can learn how responsive, truthful, and honest their representatives are." "It should be brought to the attention of the people what is going on in our country," explained another adult. "They publish the good things but we should also know what bad or wrong things he is doing." Only 13% of the 13-year-olds' responses cited this type of reason.

It is interesting to note that among 13-year-olds, government officials seem to be an elite group above criticism. Frequent response types were: "There is freedom of the press, but you should not criticize an official" or "Since he was voted in by the people, he should not be criticized." But 13-year-olds were also sensitive to the individual's feelings—to the point where they ignored the constitutional principles at stake. Thirteen percent of the 13-year-olds responded with reasons which were categorized as "it isn't fair; may hurt the official." Among these responses were: "It can hurt the official in more than one way. It can hurt his feelings and he also can lose the respect of the people." "If they could print something bad about the official that could hurt them very badly if they want to run again." One student was worried that "it may be embrassing for him." Six percent of the 17-year-olds gave similar answers. "No," said one, "because the man that is elected is trying to do his job." Another 17-year-old explained, "The reason I said 'no' is because the article could hurt his feelings and they wouldn't want anyone to criticize them."

A number of responses contained conditional statements. Most of these answers supported freedom of the press as long as the newspapers and magazines printed the "truth." "If the criticizing is true and can be proved—the people have a right to know what is going on behind there backs," said a 17-year-old. Another student said, "As long as what is printed is true the magazine has a right to its opinion."

The older respondents displayed a better understanding of freedom of press than the 13-year-olds. Although less than one third in each age group cited reasons under "freedom of the press; constitutional rights," many more indicated through their responses in other categories that they also were aware of the constitutional principles involved.

Can People Gather in a Park? (RAR11)

Do Americans unreservedly support "the right of the people peaceably to assemble" as granted in the First Amendment, or are their attitudes dependent upon a particular situation? In an attempt to find out, 13-year-olds, 17-year-olds and young adults were shown the following picture and asked:

A. *In the picture, there are many people gathered together in a public park. They are demanding changes which you do not agree with. Should these people be allowed to gather and make their demands in a public place?*

B. *Please explain your answer.*

TABLE 47
Percent of Respondents Selecting Each Choice, Exercise RAR11 Part A, Can People Gather in a Park?

Choices	Age 13	Age 17	Adult
Yes	64%	87%	78%
No	32	10	18
Undecided	4	2	4
No response	1	0	0

Seventeen-year-olds were most supportive of the freedoms of speech and assembly (Table 47).

Four out of five 17-year-olds responded affirmatively on part A and also explained why, as compared to approximately one half of the 13-year-olds and three out of four young adults.

Over one third of the respondents in each age group referred to "constitutional rights or approval of the right of assembly." Table 48 gives a complete listing of the types of reasons given at each age. However, very few of the respondents referred directly to the right of freedom of assembly. All ages mentioned freedom of speech numerous times. "Freedom of speech in America allows this," wrote a 13-year-old. "They should say what they think. The demonstration could change things by arousing other people that agree with them." "They have the right to say what they think—but they don't have the right to get what they want," warned another youth. "We should listen to them and then make up our minds. We can't just give into them." More typical of the 13-year-olds' responses were those which mentioned neither freedom of speech nor freedom of assembly. "They should be allowed to give everybody their thoughts" or "People should be able to do what they want to. They're equal" were more representative responses.

Among 17-year-olds, more typical responses were: "I have the right to disagree with what they say and they have the right to disagree with what I say." "It says in the Consitution it gives certain rights and freedom of speech is one." "They should be able to voice their opinion and they are in a public park which is there for them." "Everybody has freedom of speech," remarked one 17-year-old and then added, "There'll probably be

TABLE 48
Percent of Respondents Giving Various Reasons Why People Can or Cannot Gather in a Park, Exercise RAR11 Part B

Reasons	Age 13	Age 17	Adult
Reference to constitutional rights or approval of the right of assembly	34%	45%	37%
Yes, but considers rights of others	12	25	26
It is educational to hear different viewpoints expressed	4	2	3
Instrument for social change	3	5	4
Yes, after getting permission	1	1	2
Other acceptable responses	1	1	1
Other conditional responses	3	1	3
Parks are for recreation	3	0	0
No, they SHOULD not use a public park	3	1	1
They do not have the right. They CANNOT use a public park	1	0	0
No, because they might do some harm	9	3	6
Alternate procedure	9	4	6
Vague, nonsensical, other unacceptable responses	15	9	9
I don't know	1	0	1
No response	2	1	1

sometime that I'll be demonstrating against something they don't agree with." "They pay taxes and they have the right to say what they think," concluded another 17-year-old.

Among adult responses mentioning constitutional rights were numerous reflections of concern for order: "Well, if its in a public place its more organized—less like a mob. They do have the right to gather and demand changes in a public place." "People should be able to express feeling—political or otherwise—in a peaceful—non-violent manner—part of the constitution—'Right to Assemble.' " "Right of freedom of speech & assembly. If I can get people together who believe as I do, & go thru proper channels, we, too could assemble in a public place." This next person obviously saw something in the picture that the others did not: "They should be allowed to voice their opinion in a democratic manner. I see smoke in the background looks like there's been a riot. This is uncalled for." Another adult states, "Well! everybody has the right to speak what they think is right. That's what it says in the constitution."

Twenty-six percent of the adults' responses stressed the importance of considering the rights of others. Many of these answers also stressed the adults' preoccupation with order: "Everyone is free to express their opinion—with the stipulation as long as they behave themselves. Main thing is they should obey the law and not infringe on other people." "If they do it nicely, no riots or anything." "As long as it is peaceful & it wasn't disrupting traffic." One adult who was concerned about order was also impressed by the size of the crowd: "As long as there is not trouble or rioting its OK—if all these people are gathered together & think there is something wrong perhaps there is—it must be a good cause to attract so many people." Other concerns were that the gathering be "conducted in a peaceful manner and they have a permit" and that "they should have a good reason for gathering—something they really believe in. Not gather to be gathering."

Nearly as many 17-year-olds (25%) expressed a similar concern that things not "get out of hand." Their support of the freedoms of speech and assembly were qualified by such statements as: "If they are not violent, they should have their say." "As long as its peaceful, they've got the right to." One youth cautioned, "As long as no violence and under control. Voice their opinions. Should be some authority (national guard) there to watch just in case." One 17-year-old said he was undecided and added, "If this causes no trouble I feel its OK. But usually it ends up a big mess." Only 12% of the 13-year-olds gave reasons in this

category. They expressed some of the same concerns, but what bothered them more was the fact that this was a public park issue as well as a constitutional issue. "A public park is a place for children to play in, not for people to come in and riot," explained one student. "I don't think they should do it in a public place," added another 13-year-old, "because a public place is for everyone to enjoy and certain people with certain demands shouldn't go to a public place to express their feelings."

Rather than addressing the constitutional principles involved, some respondents offered alternate proposals for dealing with the situation in the park. These answers were considered unacceptable but are interesting in themselves for the attitudes they reveal. Thirteen-year-olds responded: "They should vote on their grievance instead of crowding the park." "There are better ways than to picket, if lots of these guys wrote letters it would do lots more good than standing. The letters would get things done and it would be cheaper in the long run, if they consider their time worth anything." Not everyone thought the solution could be found in writing letters. Another 13-year-old said, "I think they are cluddering up a public park. And as soon as they leave, there would be litter all over the place. And they should get one person or two to represent themselves so you could meet together and solve the problem and not have that crowd." A 17-year-old stated, "I feel as if these people want it bad enough there should be a place and they should fill it out on a card and then it should all be taken into consideration." Another added, "No, if they are against the school they should write to the school board. If they are against the government they should write to Congress. If enough people wrote, I'm sure they would do something about it." One adult had very strong feelings about the situation: "I don't feel like this is the right way to go about it. If its change these people want they can do it through right channels, like civilized people. Resorting to change in this manner leads to mobs & riots—which is a report back to animalism—creates hate & resentment." Another adult opposed the gathering "because of insufficient bathroom facilities for such a large group."

The exercise indicates that Americans do not unreservedly support the rights of freedom of speech and assembly. Many of the adults and 17-year-olds were concerned about the preservation of order, even if it meant the sacrifice of constitutional rights. However, 17-year-olds expressed a greater willingness to uphold the principles of the Constitution. Fewer 13-year-olds displayed dedication to the freedoms of speech and assembly.

Freedom of Speech and Press (UAR03)

In an unreleased exercise concerning individual rights, ages 13, 17 and young adult again revealed their attitudes toward freedom of speech and press. A large majority in each age group gave answers supportive of freedom of speech. Seventeen-year-olds were most supportive (88%) of the principle of free speech, followed by adults (84%) and 13-year-olds (82%). More 17-year-olds than people at other ages were capable of offering an acceptable reason to support their answers. About one half of the respondents at all ages gave reasons upholding the "right of free speech" or citing "constitutional rights." Younger respondents thought "having different opinions is educational" and frequently cited this as the reason for allowing an individual to exercise free speech.

Freedom of Speech and Press (UAR09)

In another unreleased exercise which was to determine whether students upheld the freedoms of speech and press, 69% of the 17-year-olds and 82% of the adults supported these fundamental freedoms.

Young adults cited acceptable reasons more frequently than the 17-year-olds.

Freedom of the Press (UAR10)

In an unreleased exercise, 89% of the 17-year-olds and 85% of the young adults opposed a form of censorship. The reasons most frequently cited by both age groups were that America is a free country in which its citizens have freedom of choice, and that one chief advantage of this freedom is that it is informative and educational.

Freedom of Speech and Worship (UAR06)

Another unreleased exercise elicited the attitudes of 13-year-olds, 17-year-olds and young adults toward the freedoms of religion and speech. Seventy-eight percent of the 17-year-olds and young adults and 64% of the 13-year-olds affirmed their support of these constitutional rights.

Right to Petition (UAR04)

One last unreleased exercise measuring students' attitudes toward basic rights guaranteed in the First Amendment to the Constitution revealed that four out of five 17-year-olds and adults affirmed the individual's right to petition the government.

CHAPTER 4

KNOWLEDGE OF THE ELECTORAL PROCESS AND THE ROLE OF POLITICAL PARTIES

In a democracy, it is the citizen's duty to exercise his right to vote and to uphold the electoral process. The electoral process provides for a relatively orderly transition of political power. The exercises in this chapter seek to understand whether Americans know how leaders are chosen for various national, state and local offices in the United States and if they know something about the election process and the role of political parties.

Elected and Appointed Officials (RKP16)

Thirteen-year-olds, 17-year-olds and young adults were asked the following question:

> *In the United States which one of the following men is elected to office?*

The choices were (1) a United States senator, (2) the United States secretary of state, (3) a United States Supreme Court justice or (4) the United States ambassador to Great Britain.

Three out of four 13-year-olds and nine out of ten of the older respondents selected the correct answer (Table 49).

TABLE 49
Percent of Respondents Selecting Each Choice, Exercise RKP16, Elected and Appointed Officials

Choices	Age 13	Age 17	Adult
*A United States Senator	74%	89%	90%
The United States Secretary of State	11	4	3
A United States Supreme Court Justice	7	4	3
The United States Ambassador to Great Britain	1	0	0
I don't know	8	2	4
No response	0	0	0

**Correct response*

How Presidential Candidates Are Nominated (RKP17)

Thirteen-year-olds, 17-year-olds and young adults also were asked:

> *The presidential candidate for each major political party is formally nominated by which one of the following?*

The choices were (1) the Senate, (2) a national primary, (3) a national convention or (4) the House of Representatives. The answers indicated (Table 50) that a high percentage of Americans in all three age groups were unfamiliar with one of the more basic procedures of political parties in the electoral process.

TABLE 50
Percent of Respondents Selecting Each Choice, Exercise RKP17, How Presidential Candidates Are Nominated

Choices	Age 13	Age 17	Adult
The Senate	14%	5%	3%
A national primary	17	30	24
*A national convention	17	49	60
The House of Representatives	33	12	6
I don't know	20	5	6
No response	0	0	0

**Correct response*

Evaluating Politicians (RSO06A)

Are young adults more politically sophisticated than younger persons who are not yet part of the electorate? The following exercise would indicate so. Age 13, age 17 and young adult respondents were given the following situation:

> *Suppose there are two men running for mayor in your town. One candidate thinks a large area of land in your community should be made into a public park, and the other candidate thinks the land should be used for industry.*

Each respondent was asked to "tell . . . two things you could do to find out why each candidate thinks as he does."

The percentage of acceptable answers increased with each age group. Only 42% of the 13-year-olds offered two acceptable responses. The two older groups appeared more politically astute as 62% of the 17-year-olds and 69% of the adults gave two acceptable answers.

Clearly the most popular way of finding out why each candidate thought as he did was to directly question him. Over half of the respondents in each age group selected this as one means. All assumed they could speak to the candidate in person, phone him or write a letter.

Another choice was to research the candidates' backgrounds or attitudes. Only 12% of the 13-year-olds mentioned this at least once, and their remarks expressed a certain degree of political naivete'. "Talk to someone real close to them, a running mate or someone" or "Ask someone in their family" was the extent of their research.

About twice as many 17-year-olds (22%) and young adults (24%) decided to research the candidates' backgrounds and attitudes. "Look into their past," suggested one 17-year-old; "Check into their background and see if this reveals anything," added another. The skepticism of the adults was especially notable. A number of respondents gave such answers as: "Find out who their backers are" and "You could look up his public record to see how he really votes." Other representative replies were: "Find out if either of them has any financial interest or stands to profit" and "See if the one who wants it used for industry has or owns land around the site."

The older respondents were also more likely to attend meetings, speeches and debates or to obtain information from media and campaign materials. Twenty-three percent of the young adults gave responses under each of these categories at least once; just over 20% of the 17-year-olds gave similar replies. Only 10% of the age 13 group asked questions in each of these categories at least once. Theoretically, one of the best ways of finding out why the candidates thought as they did was to research the use of the land or the needs of the community that might explain the candidates' reasoning. However, few in any age group selected this method. All ages were more willing to look for motives in the candidates' personal backgrounds and attitudes.

A number of replies were scored as "vague, nonsensical and other unacceptable responses." The percentage of people giving unacceptable responses at least once was highest among 13-year-olds (35%) and considerably lower at age 17 (16%) and among adults (12%). Many 13-year-olds appear to have misunderstood the question and gave reasons why the candidates thought as they did. The question, however, required students to give ways of finding information on why candidates made decisions. Almost all of their "unacceptable" responses were of a similar nature. Although their answers did not respond to the question and, therefore, were unacceptable, they often reflected a great deal of common sense and an understanding of the complexity of problems facing a city. The following were comments of 13-year-olds: "It would be safer for children to play in the parks." "The one who wants the park is a good idea. This will give them some place to go and keep them off the streets." "I'm against this because the industry would make air pollution." "The other guy wants to get more jobs for people."

Seventeen-year-olds gave equally interesting and insightful unacceptable responses. One might easily guess that the following statement was made by a youngster concerned about his future after graduation: "For the first one, I think they need a factory cuz more people is getting out of school and they need a job to make money." Another probably was repeating themes which he had heard for many years: "Well, I would say, the one making for the park, he trying to build this nation and he making the park to keep kids out of trouble." Others expressed opposite sides of the dilemma: "One of the reasons they want the park is for children. And there's really no place people can go here and just sit around." "Money for the taxes that the industry could pay, that's all."

The young adults had the lowest percentage of unacceptable responses and again made interesting comments (Table 51). "How were they raised," asked one respondent, "one would think play more important, the other income more important." Another felt that "one reasons is the one going for the park will feel he can get more vote because no one wants industry built in their neighborhood."

TABLE 51
Percent of Respondents Giving Various Suggestions for Researching a Political Candidate, Exercise RSO06A, Evaluating Politicians

Suggested Ways of Researching Candidates	Age 13	Age 17	Adult
Question candidate (active)	55%	58%	55%
Research candidates' backgrounds or attitudes	12	22	24
Research use of land or needs of community that might indicate candidates' thinking	8	9	15
Attend meetings, speeches and debates (passive)	10	20	23
Obtain information from media and campaign materials	10	21	23
Other acceptable responses	2	4	5
Vague, nonsensical and other unacceptable responses	35	16	12
I don't know	7	6	10
No response	16	14	9

Using a Simple Ballot (RKP18A-E)

This exercise revealed that many 17-year-olds and young adults were unable to use a simple ballot:

The ballot below was used in a general election. Look at the ballot to answer the questions on this and the following two pages.

OFFICES	LEGISLATIVE		COUNTY		
	SENATOR IN CONGRESS (vote for one)	REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS (vote for one)	COUNCILMAN (vote for two)		TAX ASSESSOR (vote for one)
DEMOCRATIC	Alan F. KIRK	John G. SMITH	Martha G. DAVIS	Peter V. MOSS	
REPUBLICAN	James M. JONES	Mary O'CONNOR	John RICHARDS	Michael M. MERWIN	Joseph L. LASKI

The questions and percentages of correct answers for both age groups are listed below:

A. *If you wanted to vote for Kirk for senator, could you also vote for O'Connor for member of the House of Representatives?*
17-year-olds 73% young adults 74%

B. *Could you vote for both Davis and Moss for councilman?*
17-year-olds 83% young adults 74%

C. *Could you vote for both Davis and Merwin for councilman?*
17-year-olds 74% young adults 71%

D. *If you were registered as a member of the Democratic Party, could you vote for Laski for tax assessor?*
17-year-olds 63% young adults 70%

E. *Could you vote for both Kirk and Jones for senator?*
17-year-olds 90% young adults 90%

As the figures above and the table below indicate (Table 52), there were no appreciable differences between the adults and 17-year-olds in their ability to use a simple ballot. What is surprising is the high percentage of the electorate who could not properly use a simple ballot.

TABLE 52
Percent of Respondents Answering Correctly on Five Parts of Exercise RKP18A-E, Using a Simple Ballot

Number of Correct Choices Out of Five	Age 17	Adult
One	99%	98%
Two	96	94
Three	82	81
Four	65	63
Exactly five	41	44

Political Obligations to Minority Groups (RAB17)

A basic problem in a democratic society is how to maintain majority rule while continuing to guarantee the rights and opinions of the minority. The following exercise sought to measure the sensitivity of 17-year-olds and young adults toward this issue. Each respondent was asked:

Should a congressman pay attention to the opinions and concerns of people whose views are different from those of the majority?

Please explain any answer you selected.

Ninety percent of the 17-year-olds and 89% of the adults replied "yes," although there was a 10 percentage point drop in each case when they were asked to give an acceptable explanation for their choice.

In both age groups, the most frequently cited response was that everyone should be represented. They offered no explanation other than it was the congressman's duty. "Everyone's opinion should be important to a congressman, for he represents the people and is the mouth piece of the people," argued one 17-year-old. "The Congressman should pay attention to the minority because they too have a say so in the government" and "He should respect the opinions of the people as well as the majority" were other replies. Many directed their answers to the minority's rights rather than to whether or not the congressman should pay attention to their views.

Adults' responses were very similar. For example: "He should be concerned about the opinions of all the people not just part of them," "He is in office to represent all the people," "A congressman represents all the people not just the majority. He should take the opinions of all those he represents into view at all times" were all typical replies.

The next most frequently cited justification for answering "yes" was that minority opinion was a source of good ideas. About one fourth of the adults and 17-year-olds offered replies of this sort. Many in both age groups acknowledged that the majority was not always right. "Yes, because the minority is sometimes right when the majority is wrong. The congressman should listen to both opinions, and then choose the best way to go," explained one 17-year-old. A young adult stated his view succinctly, "Because they just might be right." Another adult philosophized that "all points of view matter. Often in the crack of a rock, blooms a flower."

The third most popular response was categorized as "to gain knowledge; to hear different points of view; to govern more wisely." Thirteen percent of both age groups gave answers in this category. "Just because a person's opinions or views are different from the majority, doesn't mean that they should not be heard and considered. They could be just as helpful as others," argued one 17-year-old. One adult who doubted the wisdom of the majority added, "I feel he should consider opinions from informed sources as well as the uninformed majority."

Many of the 17-year-old respondents seemed to relate minorities to racial groups and assumed that once you were part of a minority you would always be in the minority. They sometimes interpreted "pay attention to" as meaning go along with. However, what is most notable in the exercise is the striking similarity of percentages and responses between 17-year-olds and young adults (Table 53).

TABLE 53
Percent of Respondents Giving Various Reasons Why a Congressman Should Consider or Ignore Minority Views, Exercise RAB17, Political Obligations to Minority Groups

Reasons	Age 17	Adult
Everyone should be represented—but no reason given (except duty)	35%	34%
Minority opinion source of good ideas	25	27
To gain knowledge; to hear different points of view; to govern more wisely	13	13
Political considerations—may need political support from minority, or because of past political support	6	3
Other acceptable responses	1	2
The majority is right or the most important	3	3
Vague, nonsensical, other unacceptable responses	12	12
I don't know	3	3
No response	3	3

Among the National Assessment subpopulation groups identified at all age levels northeasterners, Whites, those whose parents continued their education past high school and those living in affluent suburban and urban communities demonstrate the best understanding of the political process, principles and rights upon which our country was founded. Among those subpopulations which consistently performed below national levels at all four age levels were southeasterners, Blacks, those who indicated that the highest level of education for either parent was less than or only some high school and those living in poor urban communities.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY OF GROUP RESULTS

How National Assessment Summary Results Are Presented

Chapters 1-4 have presented national results for each exercise in this volume. The following chapter presents summary results for various subpopulations at each age level.

National Assessment divides the national population at ages 9, 13, 17 and adult into various groups of people in order to provide data about certain types of schools and students. The variables used for this division are region of the country, sex, color, parental education and size and type of community. They are defined as follows:

National Assessment Groups

Region. The country has been divided into four regions—Southeast, West, Central and Northeast—in order to present results for various regions relative to the national results. The states that are included in each region are shown in Exhibit 1.

EXHIBIT 1
National Assessment Geographic Regions

Sex. Results are also presented for males and for females.

Color. Currently, we present results for Blacks and Whites.

Parental education. The four parental education categories are defined by the highest level of education attained by *either* of a person's parents. The no high school category is comprised of all people who indicated that neither parent went to high school. The some high school category consists of all those who indicated that the parent with the most education attended high school but did not graduate. In the graduated from high school category are all those who indicated that at least one parent graduated from high school, and in the post high school group are all who indicated that at least one parent received some post high school education. (This may mean college, but it also includes adult education courses of any kind or vocational training.)

Size and type of community (STOC). The groups within this variable are defined by the size of a person's community and an occupational profile of the area his or her school serves.

Low metro. People in this group attend schools in cities with populations greater than 150,000; the schools serve areas in which a high proportion of the residents are on welfare or not regularly employed.

Extreme rural. People in this group attend schools in a community having a population less than 3,500. Most residents in the area the school serves are farmers or farm workers.

High metro. Individuals in this group attend schools within the city limits or residential area served by a city with a population greater than 150,000; the area served by the school consists primarily of professional or managerial personnel.

Main big city. These are students attending schools in a big city (population greater than 200,000) who are not included in either the low metro or high metro groups.

Medium city. Individuals in this group attend schools in cities with populations between 25,000 and 200,000.

Small places. People in this group attend schools in a community of less than 25,000 inhabitants.

Urban fringe. People in this group attend schools in the metropolitan area served by a city with more than 200,000 inhabitants; the school and the area it serves are outside of the city limits and not in the high or low metro groups.

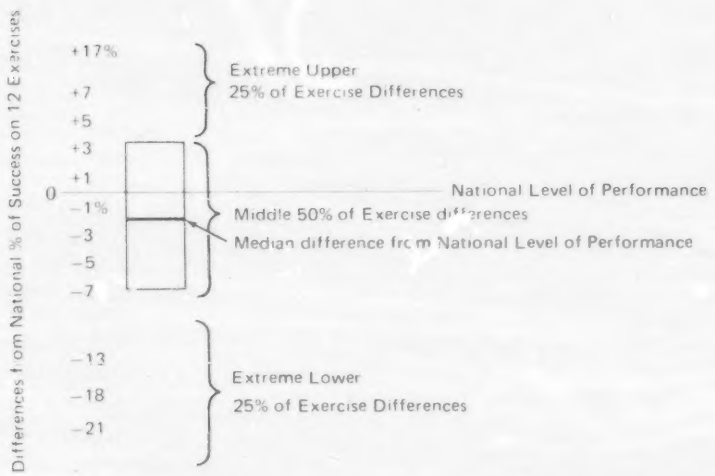
Group Differences from the National Percentage

The tables in Chapters 1-4 present national percentages of success at ages 9, 13, 17 and adult. But it is interesting also to know how individual groups performed and how their performances compared to the national results. These groups are defined by region, sex, color, parental education and size and type of community, as previously noted. If, on a given exercise, a group's percentage is lower than the national percentage, the difference between the two percentages is expressed as a negative number; if a group's percentage of success is higher than national percentage, the group's differences in performance is expressed as a positive number.

In a given set of exercises, a group's achievement can be summarized conveniently by examining its differences from national percentages of success. For example: If, on a set of five exercises the percentages of success for all 9-year-olds were 90%, 40%, 82%, 75% and 60%, and the percentages of success for a particular group—Northeast 9-year-olds, for instance—on these same exercises were, respectively, 95%, 44%, 85%, 77% and 61%, then the group's differences would be +5%, +4%, +3%, +2% and +1%. The group's median difference from a national performance level—that figure above and below which 50% of its exercise differences lie—would be +3%. National Assessment has found that median differences provide stable indicators of a group's typical performance over a set of exercises. If one desires a single figure to describe a group's performance relative to a national level of performance on a set of exercises, this is clearly the most useful figure to consult. However,

a more complete picture of a group's typical performance emerges from examination of the entire range of differences or, more conveniently, the range of the middle 50% of the exercise differences. The summary graphs (Exhibits 4-8) in this chapter depict not only the median differences for each group, but the range of this middle 50% of the exercise differences as well. They exclude the top 25% and bottom 25% of the exercise differences. For example, given the full range of exercise differences presented in Exhibit 2 (from +17% to −21%) we can display a group's typical performance by presenting its median difference and the range of the middle 50% of its exercise differences. Although by doing this we exclude the group's extreme differences, we do accurately depict its typical performance over a number of exercises.

EXHIBIT 2
How Differences from the National Percentage of Success are Reported: Sample Graph



If a group's performance on any individual exercise deviates considerably from the patterns established in the overall summary data, the deviation is discussed in the text.

Limitations of the Data

Within the limitations due to measurement and sampling error, the data that appears in this report accurately describe the educational achievements of the groups designated in our sample.

When the data show that a group's overall level of achievement is either above or below the national level, one must exercise great caution in speculating about the causes. Consider, for example, a hypothetical group whose achievement is well above the national performance level. Most members of the group may attend schools which have excellent physical facilities and high quality faculties, belong to families which have attained a high socioeconomic level, have well-educated parents and come from homes with many reading materials. Any of these factors could contribute to the group's high level of achievement, while membership in the group may itself contribute very little or nothing. When we look at the data for a given group, therefore, we cannot say that any difference in achievement between that group and the nation as a whole is attributable solely to membership in that group.

Overall Group Performance

How well did the various National Assessment groups perform on the exercises presented in this volume? Did performance tend to vary with age for any of these groups? By comparing the differences in group results to the national results we can begin to answer these questions. Exhibits 3 through 7 graphically display the typical performance patterns for each National Assessment group at ages 9, 13, 17 and young adult. Each bar represents the range of the middle 50% of the group's exercise differences as explained in Exhibit 2.

At age 9, 14 exercises were administered, so a bar represents those seven exercise differences that comprise the middle 50% of the entire range of 14 differences. At age 13, 35 exercises were administered. In this case, a bar represents the middle 18 exercise differences for a group. At age 17, 50 exercises were administered, so each bar represents the middle 25 exercise differences. Adults took 47 exercises; therefore, a bar represents the range of the middle 24 exercise differences for a group. The horizontal line crossing each bar is the median difference for that group. The positive and negative numbers along the vertical axis represent differences (in percentage points) from the national performance level.

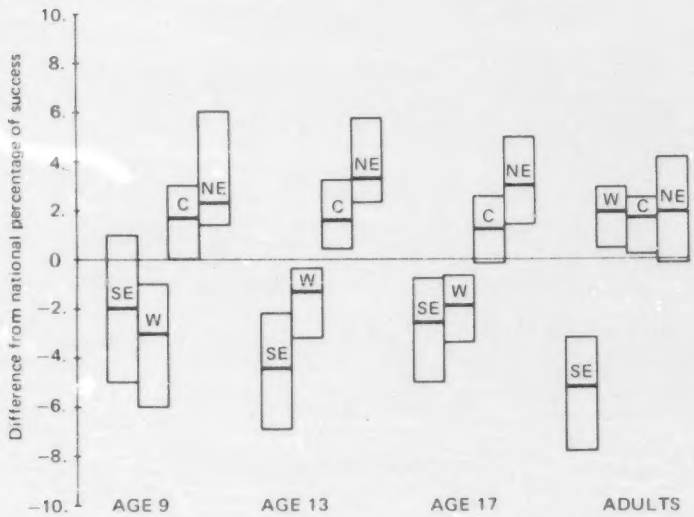
Not only were 9-year-olds given fewer exercises than the older respondents, they were given a set of exercises more appropriate to their age and experience. Consequently, it is difficult to compare their results to the results attained by the older groups.

Performance by Region

In general, the Southeast performed below national performance levels at all four ages (Exhibit 3). Although the 9-year-olds did not break this pattern, their relative performance

EXHIBIT 3

Political Knowledge and Attitudes. Regional Performance Compared to National Performance



SE – Southeast
W – West
C – Central
NE – Northeast
0 – National Level of Performance
— Median Difference

was slightly better than that of 13-year-olds, 17-year-olds or young adults from this region. This is evidenced by the fact that the median difference for Southeast 9-year-olds was approximately −2%, and the middle 50% of their exercise differences ranged from +1% to −5%. The next best performance for southeasterners occurred at age 17, where the median difference was approximately −3% and the middle 50% of the exercise differences ranged from −1% to −5%.

The performance pattern for the West is perhaps the most interesting. At ages 9, 13 and 17, more than three fourths of the exercise differences were below the national performance level. However, among young adults this situation dramatically reversed, as more than three fourths of the exercise differences were above the national performance level. We can ascertain this because any time the middle 50% of a group's exercise differences lie completely above or below the national performance level, one knows that at least 75% of the differences lie there, since 25% of a group's differences always lie above and below each bar (see Exhibit 2).

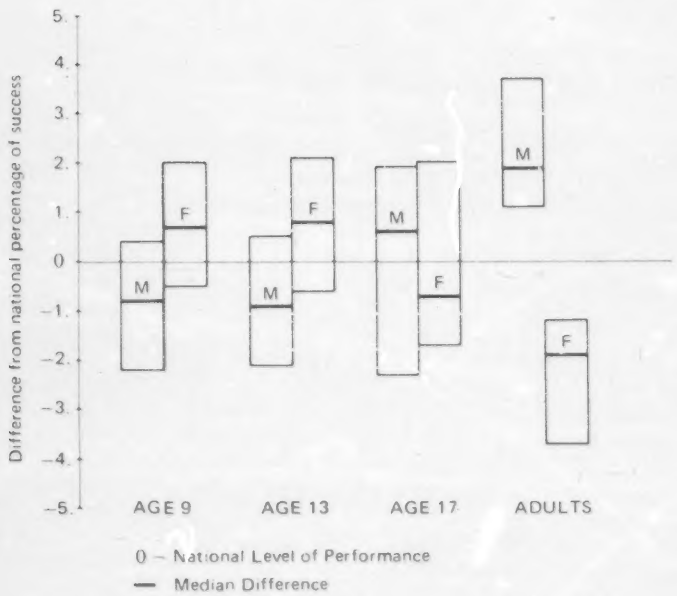
The Central region displayed the most stable pattern. This group tended to be above the national percentage of success at all four ages.

The results for the Northeast generally were above the national percentage of success.

Male-Female Performance

As Exhibit 4 shows, females tended to perform better than males at ages 9 and 13. At age 17, the pattern reversed, males tending to perform slightly above the national level.

EXHIBIT 4
Political Knowledge and Attitudes. Male-Female Performance Compared to National Performance

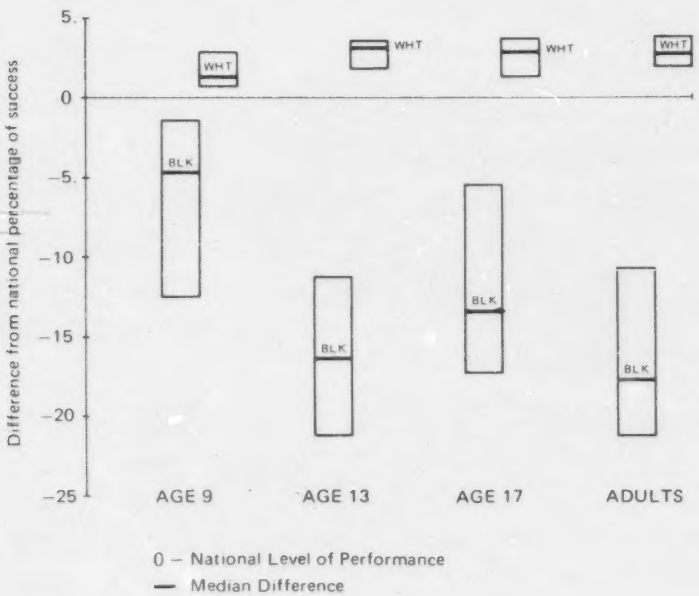


Among young adults, the reversal became even more evident. On more than three fourths of all the exercises the males were above the national levels of performance; the females were below.

Black-White Performance

Exhibit 5 clearly indicates that Whites perform consistently above the national level of success, while Blacks perform consistently below the nation. More interesting and perhaps more useful is a comparison across ages. Whites tended to maintain a relatively stable advantage over the nation at all ages. Black performance, however, fluctuated considerably across ages. The median difference for Blacks came closest to the national level at age 9, but the gap between Black and national performance levels widened considerably at ages 13, 17 and young adult.

EXHIBIT 5
Political Knowledge and Attitudes. Black-White Performance Compared to National Performance



Performance by Level of Parental Education

At all ages, respondents with at least one parent having more than a high school education performed above national levels on more than three fourths of the exercises (Exhibit 6). Those whose parents had no high school displayed a notable disadvantage, performing well below national levels on at least three fourths of the exercises. Among 9, 13 and 17-year-olds who indicated the highest level of education of either parent to be some

high school, the disadvantage remained great with performance on more than three fourths of the exercises falling below national levels; however, performance was generally not as poor as for the no high school group. The some high school group came closer to national performance at the adult level. Thirteen and 17-year-olds indicating that at least one parent graduated from high school performed at about national levels, although 9-year-olds in this group performed above national levels on over three fourths of the exercises. Among young adults, this advantage was even more notable.

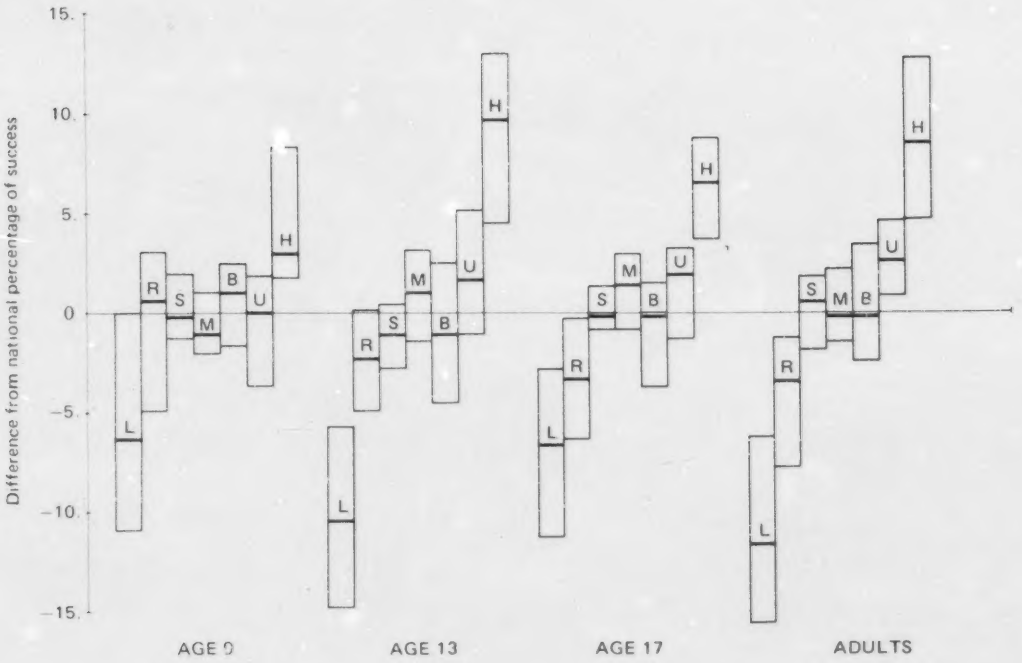
EXHIBIT 6
Political Knowledge and Attitudes. Performance of Parental Education Groups Compared to National Performance

NHS – No high school
SHS – Some high school
GHS – Graduated high school
PHS – Post high school
0 – National Level of Performance
— Median Difference

Performance by Size and Type of Community

As Exhibit 7 indicates, the performance levels of groups categorized as small places, medium city or the main big city are at or very close to the national performance levels at all ages. The median difference for the rural group tended to fall increasingly below the national levels after age 9. By ages 17 and adult, more than three fourths of the exercise differences are below the national level. In contrast to the rural group, the urban fringe tended to improve upon its relative performance after age 9. The performance levels for adults on more than three fourths of the exercises were above the national levels. The differences from national performance for high and low metro were the most extreme. High metro respondents performed well above the nation at all ages, while, conversely, low metro performances were below national levels.

EXHIBIT 7
Political Knowledge and Attitudes. Performance of STOC Groups Compared to National Performance



L – Low metro
R – Extreme rural
S – Small place
M – Medium city
B – Main big city
U – Urban fringe
H – High metro
0 – National Level of Performance
— Median Difference

Group Performance by Chapter or Exercise Type

An examination of group results chapter by chapter reveals some performance patterns for certain groups. For instance, the Southeast regional group at ages 13, 17 and young adult performed poorest relative to the national performance on Chapter 3 exercises, which involve knowledge of and attitudes toward constitutional rights. Males at all ages seemed to do better on knowledge exercises than on attitude questions. Females, on the other hand, showed a consistent advantage over males on the attitude questions. The other groups tended to perform at a level consistent with the patterns depicted in Exhibits 3-7 regardless of the chapter topic or exercise type.

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